

NEITHER'S THE MAN:

A COMEDY, *6.*

IN FIVE ACTS:

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL, CHESTER.

BY

MRS. HOLFORD,

AUTHOR OF FANNY, SELIMA, GRESFORD VALE, &c.

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PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY THE AUTHOR.

SPOKEN BY MR. WARD.

“ NEITHER’s the Man !” I hear a lady say ;
“ What a conceited title for a play !
“ If, as in days of yore, as poets tell,
“ An eye could hamper legions in a spell ;
“ Had not our influence been known to dwindle,
“ Since for his dame Alcides turn’d the spindle,
“ Miss might plead privilege for being nice,
“ And women....Heaven bless us !....have a choice !
“ Those halcyon days, alas ! have long been over,
“ And now, for *rara avis*, write ‘ a lover ;’
“ Unless, transform’d, we see the tender passion
“ Become the rage for any whim in fashion,
“ Now tight in hand, to drive four bits of blood,
“ And match ’em, demme, for a knowing stud !
“ Yet still inconstant the dear swains appear,
“ The best affections will be seen to veer :
“ Newmarket....Pharo....then usurp the go,
“ And shine in rivalship with Rotten-row !
“ Tell your pert author, if in times like these,
“ The world’s proud rulers she designs to please,
“ She must submissively reverse her plan,
“ And, curtsying, own that *any is the Man.*”

Hold ! madam, pray remember, while you’re railing,
That man from woman first deriv’d a failing :

PROLOGUE.

Grant that your col'ring may in part be true,
We are not all alike....no more are you.
Our author knows, though these degen'rate days
Afford more food for satire than for praise,
Virtue still lives, th'admiring world shall own,
The steady basis of the British throne!
Though scenes of vice pollute life's checquer'd stage,
Exalted merit shall adorn our page;
And unborn heroes, glowing as they read,
Shall pant to emulate the godlike deed:
Shall, on the splendid roll of England's fame,
Long bless a Nelson's and a Warren's name.
Here rank and worth in one meridian move,
With many gracious attributes, to prove
That with the laurel still the myrtle thrives,
And valiant heroes spring from happy wives.

EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY THE AUTHOR.

SPOKEN BY MRS. HATTON.

HER trial o'er, our author bade me face
The court again, and do my best to trace,
By some art magic (which she can't impart)
Each secret record graven on the heart.....
I read men's hearts!....'Tis no such task of ease,
I'll steal them, by the dozen, if you please.
Who, in these days, knows where to look for wit?
In front, side boxes, gallery, or pit!.....

EPILOGUE.

In former times, as humdrum writers tell,
When he in Grecian cities us'd to dwell,
Ever distinguished by his gait or air,
The people knew when it was time to stare :
With perip'tetic zeal, he'd step along,
The walking wonder of the gazing throng ;
Or with dumb eloquence, yet more surprise,
And hold his tongue, to be accounted wise :
With bearded gravity, give vice a rub,
Or snarl forth musty morals from a tub.
In ev'ry age, in ev'ry clime, 'tis quoted,
By some exterior badge, he's been denoted ;
By wigs, long robes, or golden-headed canes.....
But what now typifies a stock of brains ?.....
Of wit, in the male line, 'tis past a doubt,
With all his emblems, that the title's out :
Yet with us still he has a lurking place,
And, grown more polish'd, wears a fairer face ;
On the same wheels, the alter'd world still rolls,
And wigs are wigs, though they have chang'd their polls.
In an old head-dress, then, but quarters new,
The wand'ring spirit I'll present to view :
There, in a light-brown bob, divinely curl'd,
The little happy traitor sits infurl'd,
The willing captive of a smiling grace,
Contented never more to quit his place.
To you, ye fair, then, henceforth we will plead,
The beaux must follow where you take the lead ;
Mercy's the standard gentle chiefs will raise,
And faint endeavours may aspire to praise.

DRA-

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Lord Filligree,..... Mr. JONES.
Sir Waldon Levington,..... Mr. PENSON.
Sir Charles Mortimer,..... Mr. RAYMOND.
Mordecai,..... Mr. SAUNDERS.
Squire Mortimer,..... Mr. WARD.
Burton,..... Mr. EGAN.
Frizz,..... Mr. TURPIN.
Boy.
Servant.

WOMEN.

Widow Freelove,..... Mrs. EGAN.
Miss Hastings,..... Mrs. BERNARD.
Miss Flimsy,..... Mrs. TURPIN.
Betty,..... Mrs. WENTWORTH.
Miss Mansfield (*with a SONG*).. Mrs. HATTON.
Old Woman,..... Mr. GLASSINGTON.
Girl.

NEITHER'S THE MAN.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I....*The Park.*

Enter SIR CHARLES MORTIMER and BURTON, meeting.

SIR CHARLES.

AH! Burton!...This rencontre is opportune, and spares me the ceremony of dropping a ticket at your door.

BURTON. My dear boy! How unexpected is this pleasure!But what extraordinary attraction has been able to detach you from the country, before the season of fox-hunting is at an end?

SIR CHA. To confess the truth, the little blind urchin, whose darts you have heard me so frequently defy, has caught me in his toils at last; and, to punish me for my infidelity, like a Will-o'-the-wisp, he has dazzled my eyes, misled my senses, and ere long thou wilt see me hurried down the precipice of despair.

BURTON. Despair!....I pr'ythee change thy dress, then; and let not the uniform of a British soldier be disgraced by the language of despondency.....Courage....Hope....Perseverance....and Success....form the glorious motto which adorns his crest.

SIR CHA. True, my friend; and Fate, I trust, has not reserved for me the task of tarnishing an ornament, so dearly

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purchased, and so honourably retained....Yet there is a service wherein fear may predominate over hope, and though a boy is the leader of the adversary's forces, you will not say that I am the first British soldier vanquished by the power of his arms.

BURTON. That is to say, in one word, you are in love.... Come, come, leave me no longer blundering in the dark : but let me have the name of the heroine of this lamentable ditty.

Sir CHA. In a word, then, the heroine of it is thy capricious, giddy, whimsical, coquetish, dear, angelic cousin, Miss Emma Mansfield. It was my cursed fortune to meet with her at a ball in the country ; and though I did not get myself introduced to her at that time, my heart, singed by the heat of thy extravagant encomiums, was ready to take fire at the first glance, and off went my senses like a skyrocket, leaving the poor mortal part ungoverned by one acting principle, except that fatal attraction, which, like the hill of adamant, irresistibly impels me towards my destruction.

BURTON. The common cant of a disappointed lover, who never fails to draw the *modest* conclusion, that his mistress's heart must be formed of adamant, because it is impenetrable to his sighs. Jestings apart, one unsuccessful sally is frequently the prelude to a compleat victory : If the lady has not been influenced in her refusal of you, by a partiality for some more favoured rival.....

Sir CHA. Refusal !...No, I thank my stars, that is a humiliation I have escaped. On the morning after the ball, she set off for Bath, whither I immediately followed her ; and presuming on the shortness of my residence in England, my
uncle's

uncle's death whilst I was abroad, and having some hopeful cousins of the same name, I became acquainted with her under the character of a poor soldier.

BURTON. And, under this deception, she behaved to you with the same indifference?

Sir CHA. Exactly; but with somewhat more civility than to my competitors; and even with this negative consolation I remained tolerably content, till I suddenly awakened from the tranquil dream, by her unexpected departure, for the purpose, as it was said, of bestowing her hand on the more fortunate possessor of her heart. Probably you know whether or not there is any real foundation for the report.

BURTON. More than belongs to one in a thousand....You will find me but a poor comforter....You must know, that on this very day, your mistress arrives at the age of twenty-one; and on this evening, she has promised her guardian to determine the fate of the two redoubtable heroes, who are happy enough to be distinguished by his approbation; to one of whom, he expects her to present her hand. Sir Waldon gives a ball in honour of the event; if you can stand the test on which the existence of your hopes depends, I have a ticket at your service.

Sir CHA. Heavens and earth! do you take me for a stoic? ...What, behold the woman I adore devote herself to another!....Pleasant enough, i'faith!....Wouldn't you have me compose a poesy for the wedding-ring also, or offer myself as nuptial father to the bride, and present her hand to the cursed happy dog, who has dashed the cup of felicity from my lips?....No, no, I will this night give up my commission, and rush a volunteer into the foremost lines of battle; there, perhaps.....

BURTON. Come, come....restrain the impetuosity of your passion....Fancy me your General, and you are too good a soldier not to submit to my commands. This evening the real character of Miss Mansfield will be clearly developed. Esteem is the very mother's milk of a sentimental passion; and, without that congenial nourishment, it must expire in the cradle.

SIR CHA. Ah! my friend....It is for you to "jest at scars that never felt a wound:" But if her gentle bosom should be animated with a ray of sensibility....

BURTON. Do you think it will ever be devoted to either of those bewitching Strephons who are pacing along the Mall?

SIR CHA. Pshaw!....It is with me no subject for trifling....

BURTON. I am serious, upon my honour. One of them is esteemed the richest Jew in the city. The other is a pretty fribble, with a large unencumbered estate, ycleped my Lord Filligree; and, notwithstanding the contrariety of their characters, the fear of each other, which generally keeps rivals at a distance, operates so differently on their dispositions, that they are seldom seen asunder.

SIR CHA. Gad so....Now they turn this way, I recollect the face of the latter: He was neighbour to my uncle in the country; and, should we meet, he will wish me joy of my new title; so good morning to you, for I must avoid him.

BURTON. No....the compliment may be paid, perhaps, at a season more mal-opportune than the present. So encounter him at once. Only swear you will blow out the brains of the first man who addresses you by any other title than that of poor Charles Mortimer, and I will ensure his obedience.

Busi-

Business calls on me, however. But I dine at home; and if you are disengaged, shall expect you at five.

SIR CHA. I would attend you with all my heart, but I am such a poor unsociable devil, unfit for the company even....

BURTON. Of your own thoughts;....therefore I shall depend upon you. [Exeunt severally.]

Enter, from a house in the side scene, an Old Woman dressed like a Fortune-teller, followed by BETTY, Miss MANSFIELD'S Maid.

OLD WOM. [*looking about.*] You may advance....The coast is clear.

BETTY. I am so *afeard* of meeting Sir Valdon, or any of his clerks....Good bye to you, mother....My stars! If all you have told me should come to pass! I then should have wherewithal to make you amends accordingly.

OLD WOM. Well, but in the meanwhile, could not you recommend me to a few good customers....Now there is your young lady....If you could but coax a little....Now I say, if you could but persuade her to make a trial of my art....you only need assure her, that I can see every thing that is to come.

BETTY. Why then, good mother, you might surely see so far into my lady's mind, as to know she vill do no such thing. You might as vell tell me to remove the Monument....Gracious! How she vould laugh at being axed to have her fortin told!

OLD WOM. What! is she a laugher? I don't like that. Your grave and sentimental ladies always place confidence in my skill....Poor child, thou must not think to instruct me. Take courage; for know, that I have discovered by *my art*,
that

that if thou makest the most of *tbine*, thy mistress will be at this door, in a close bonnet, before sun-set.

BETTY. *Vhy, if you have discovered it !...But then you must give me resolution, by your art ; or I can no more ax my lady to wisit a fortin-teller....*

OLD WOM. Only fancy one of my invisible agents at your elbow.

BETTY. Don't make me tremble....If such a thought vas to come into my head, it would terrify me out of my vits, and my tongue vould cleave to the roof of my mouth, so that I should not be able to speak a vord. No, pray, dear mother, keep all your invisable creeturs at home.

OLD WOM. If you speak boldly, I will ; but if you hesitate, I have a little diligent imp in my service, that shall pinch you without mercy, till you succeed.

BETTY. Then you may depend upon my best endeavours.

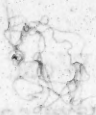
OLD WOM. And you must be sure to give me timely information.

BETTY. Vhy dont you know every thing before it happens ?

OLD WOM. To be sure....but....but I have a dispute to settle in the Moon about that time ; and it is the planet Venus that I consult when your lady is concerned.

BETTY. Is not that von of our people at the bottom of the valk ! Farevell, I'll be sure to come. [Exit.

OLD WOM. Pray do....If I had no agents but those that are invisible, mine would not be so profitable a trade as I contrive to make it.

 [Exit.

SCENE

SCENE II....*Another part of the Park.*

Enter Lord FILLIGREE, Sir CHARLES MORTIMER, and
MORDECAI.

LORD FIL. Well! You are the first man I ever knew
ashamed of a title and a large estate.

SIR CHA. You mistake me entirely, my Lord. Be assured,
I shall never be ashamed of honours bestowed upon my
ancestors by the King and country they served. But I am
subject to extraordinary whims, and the prevailing one at
present happens to be *modesty*.....How you stare! Perhaps
this is a trait in my character with which you were not before
acquainted.

LORD FIL. Pardon my ignorance; for egad, my dear Sir
Charles (Captain Mortimer, I mean) it is the last foible of
which I should have suspected you.

SIR CHA. Then, by way of example, you must know,
that military glory is my hobby-horse; and I am so devilish
humble, that if I can support the title of a British soldier,
without any derogation from its wonted splendor, my ambi-
tion will be fully gratified. Jestng apart, I am actuated by
a private reason; and were you, or any man acquainted with
my intentions, to betray them, I should deem myself bound
in honour to resent the injury.

MOR. For my part, I never babble about affairs dat do
not consharn my own interesht.

LORD FIL. Nor I, 'pon my honour. But, my dear Captain,
whilst you are gathering fresh laurels abroad, is it not a
thousand pities that the antient honours of your family should
lie out of use! Now if you could lend your title to my friend
Mor-

Mordecai here, it might advance him a step in the favour of his mistress; and may I die if I should be jealous of the advantage.

MOR. I am obliged to you, my Lord, but I have too high an opinion of her disharnment to think I vant any advansment.

Lord FIL. [*apart to Sir Charles.*] Shall I tell you an excellent joke!...This little *elegant* fellow is a rival of mine....He he he! We are both candidates for the favour of the same lady, and the election is to be this evening.....Poor Jew!...How happy he looks!....Thinks himself sure of the returning vote....'Tis immensely ridiculous!...He he he!

Sir CHA. Ridiculous enough, upon my soul!....May I ask the name of the fair lady, distinguished by the admiration of two such amiable suitors?

MOR. It is Mish Emma Manshfield, Shir Valdon Levington's rich vard. She hash a very large eshtate, and a monshteroush deal of ready monish.

Lord FIL. That is all Mordecai thinks of....Have you ever seen the lady?

Sir CHA. I think I have....Was she not at Bath this season?

Lord FIL. The same....And what think you? An air of ton, eh?....A little too much vivacity, perhaps....But that I shall correct when she is my wife.

Sir CHA. [*aside.*] Thy wife!....How shall I command my patience!

Lord FIL. Then you must allow, she dresses well....Never saw clothes sit more elegantly.

Sir CHA. [*aside.*] Insensible puppy!....Indeed, my Lord, whenever I have had the honour of being in her company, my attention has happened to be engaged by so many more
in-

interesting beauties, that I had none to throw away on Miss Mansfield's gown, I assure you. Don't be angry....It is not necessary for every man to fall in love with the same woman, you know.

LORD FIL. Certainly not....It is a compliment I have not the conscience to expect.

SIR CHA. Is not that the lady's Abigail coming this way?....charged with some tender embassy, I doubt not....I have seen the young woman before, as well as her mistress....I will not interrupt business.

LORD FIL. But, my dear Baronet incog. which of us will you allow to consider himself under the auspicious influence of your good wishes?

SIR CHA. O! fie! my Lord!....That is pressing too hard upon good breeding....What can I possibly say, but that I wish you both equal success, upon my soul! [Exit.

LORD FIL. He he he!....You, Mordecai, at least, have reason to thank the gentleman for his politeness.

MOR. May be sho, if I could undershtand it.

LORD FIL. His having put his birth and fortune into masquerade, is no bad hit for us, however; as he is acquainted with our mistress.....There is an easy impudence about the fellow, that takes wonderfully with the women.

MOR. Yesh, it might be dangeroush, vid hish great inheritansh, from his fader, and from hish uncle too, vho vash a very careful man.

Enter BETTY.

LORD FIL. Well, Mrs. Betty, what news have you for us?

MOR. I am sure, if you would own it, you know.....

c

BETTY.

BETTY. [*holding out a hand to each.*] Aye....what would you give now to know as much as I do?

LORD FIL. O! I would give the universe, were it in my possession.

MOR. And I would give de world myself....if I had it.

BETTY. Pooh! Don't go for to bamboozle me with your worlds and such like bag-tails, as my mistress would depopulate them, if she heard you. For my part, I walue one heavy guinea from the Mint....

MOR. Yesh, yesh....but guineash are too shcarce to trow away for sho short an antishipation of happinesh.

BETTY. There's an old Jew for you!

LORD FIL. What could you expect from the little Israelite!I hope you have not forgot my liberality to you on Monday last.

BETTY. [*scornfully.*] On Monday last!... Bless me! I believe you think I've the memory of the Great Mogul and all his dromedaries to boot. Vell, it is all the same to me; you keeps your money, and I desarnes my information. Don't go for to sustain me, gentlemen: I am in haste. [*Stalks away.*]

LORD FIL. What an unconscionable gypsy!....She is enough to make a gentleman swear, pasitively.

MOR. Vhat a shad ting, dat a young voman should be sho overtaken vid de shin of avarish! [*Exeunt.*]

Re-enter Mrs. BETTY.

BETTY. Vhat! gone already; vithout leaving one poor, pitiful token, by vay of remembrance for the last time. I vonder vvhich vay they vent; I must find them, and try to tempt them, by dissimilating that I know something of very great.....

[*Going.*
Enter

Enter Sir CHARLES, who runs after her, and pulls her gown.

BETTY. Mercy on me !....Sure the imp is not at my elbow already.

Sir CHA. Sweet Mrs. Betty, if you have any more penny-worths, pray bring them to my market. It were a pity to display any choice wares before such contemptible hagglers.

[Giving her money.]

BETTY. Laws, Mr. Mortimer ! Is it you !...What a fright you put me in !...I thought I never should have got my breath again, for sure !...How my heart pants !...Who thought of seeing you again so soon !...Vell, wherever you comes, you always takes care to secure a velcome ; I vill say that for you..... What do you think I dreamt of last night ?

Sir CHA. You must ask some wiser person....I don't understand dreams. I took the liberty to stop you, as an old acquaintance, just to ask you how you did, inquire the news, and so forth.

BETTY. Adad, and if all old acquaintance took such defective means to be vell received, there would be no valking along the Mall, for the close embraces of country cousins.

Sir CHA. You are a wit, I perceive, Mrs. Betty. Come, come, have you nothing to tell me ? I long to know what is going on in the great world. Apropos....Is there any truth in the report, that your young lady is going to be married to one of those *elegant* gentlemen you were speaking to this moment ?....For my part, I think it is impossible.

BETTY. Aye, that is because you don't know my mistress's mind as vell as I do. To be sure, she has a most inspiring mind. Marry one of them ? Yes, i'faith vill she, if nobody richer nor greater steps in to forbid the banns ; and so she would if he vere as ugly as one of the Giants in Guildhall,

and he vere made all of gold, or the Emperor of Morroco himself....for the sake of being an Emporess, blackamoor as he is.

Sir CHA. Lord, Lord, that so heavenly a countenance should conceal a heart so mercenary!

BETTY. Mercenary....Yes, yes, with all her faults, she is monstrous marcenary and affable, that I must say. Vhy she vill sometimes talk to me, just as if I vas von of her superlatives....“ Lord, Betty,” says she, “vhat a difference there is between you and me!”

Sir CHA. Indeed! She must have some discernment too, to discover that.

BETTY. “Vhy,” says she, “if I vas in your place,” says she, “I should never be happy till I vas a lady; and,” says she, “vith your person and accomplishments,” says she, “I see no manner of objection,” says she; “besides, Betty,” says she, “I knows you are a prudent girl, and I dare say you have made a pretty little fortin by your place,” says she....

Sir CHA. [*aside.*] 'Sdeath! I shall go mad, if the devil does not stop her tongue. [*Aloud.*] Very true, Mrs. Betty, very true. I am aware of your wonderful talents. But one word, if you please.....

BETTY. Laws, ma'am, then says I, vhy should you think so! only consider how expensive dress is, says I, to a person of figure!...There are bonnets and caps, you know, says I; and laces, and silks, and muslin, and muffs, and fans, and gloves, and silk stockings, says I:....For though [*looking significantly*] between ourselves, I have all these things from her, before they are half worn out, I am not so foolish as to let a lady think she gives them away for any other purpose than to disencumber her vardrobe.

Sir

Sir CHA. I don't doubt your discretion ; but, for pity's sake, indulge me.

BETTY. " Ah ! Betty," then says she, " you are a fly one ; but I knows wery vell, that you are a canonical, for all that ; and I am sure in a year or two's time you will be a wery pretty match for the younger son of a gentleman. A chaplin, now, in a nobleman's family ; they are always in the road to interment, you know : or," says she, " if you vould condescend," says she, " to take up with an officer of small fortin," says she, " vhat a notable, useful help-mate vould you be to him ! But you are so humble," then says she, " your modesty always stands in the vay of your vell-doing."

Sir CHA. It is a troublesome companion, I must say. But have some compassion on my curiosity.

BETTY. Dear Captain, I have hardly the heart to refuse you any thing : I could stay here conversing vith you all the day long. But I do believe my mistress is vaiting for me all the vwhile.

Sir CHA. Well, if we must part, adieu, sweet Mrs. Betty.... Present my compliments to your lady.....Though, perhaps, I may call upon her myself in the course of the morning, *en passant*. Ten thousand thanks for your very *interesting* communications. [Exit.

BETTY. " Wery interesting commisserations."...O ! the dear man ! If he is not as clever at taking a hint, as I am at giving one....The old voman told me my fates vould be a red-coat.....Vhat did he say of vaiting on my lady in a passion ? ...Vell, I'll present his compliments ; and as for quarrels and any-morosity, I never meddles nor makes with other people's business. [Exit.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I....*A Room in Sir Waldon Levington's House.*

MISS MANSFIELD *discovered at breakfast, with Lord FILLIGREE on the other side of the table, combing her lap-dog.*

MISS MANSFIELD.

I TAKE great delight in seeing my servants usefully employed. When you have combed Chloe, I will shew you the train of my next Birth-day suit. Perhaps you will furnish me with a hint, to improve the pattern.

LORD FIL. I shall be most immensely happy....That is so much in my way.

MISS M. O! you are always agreeable.

A Servant enters, and announces Mrs. FREELOVE and Miss FLIMSY.

MISS M. How horridly provoking! to be interrupted in so delectable a tête a tête, by two such odious creatures!....[*To Lord Fil.*] What! you are not putting down the dog, I hope!ashamed of being employed in my service!

LORD FIL. Heavens! no....I only thought it would be civil to rise and receive the ladies.

[*Takes up the dog again, and draws his chair out of sight.*]

Enter

A COMEDY.

Enter Mrs. FREELOVE and Miss FLIMSY.

Miss M. My adorable Widow! My beloved Flim! How kind it is of you to think of me so soon after the fatigues of the evening!

WID. Bless me, child! you are not at breakfast, surely, at this time of day!...You that were famed for the rusticity of your hours!

Miss M. One polishes imperceptibly, under the influence of good examples. But I long to hear how you were entertained at the Masquerade last night. There were a multitude of people.

WID. And, for such a multitude, tolerably genteel.

Miss FLIM. I should have enjoyed the evening prodigiously, had it not been for the officiousness of my Lord Duke. When a man is so particular in his attentions in public, it throws a woman into a very distressing situation.

Miss M. Ha ha ha! a most insupportable grievance, I confess! Though, indeed, I should not wonder if a beau of any description were absolutely become a bore in the estimation of the Widow and yourself, who have so infinite a train of them at command. For my part, if I can pick up a dangler of any sort, to attend me into public, I think myself superlatively happy.

Miss F. [*aside.*] What airs she gives herself, because she happens to be the fashion! [*Aloud.*] Pray were not some of the characters very tolerably supported?

Miss M. Tolerably enough. Were not you most unmercifully beset by a teasing gypsy?....For my part, I could scarcely get rid of her for a moment.

Miss FLIM. [*aside to Widow.*] I believe so, indeed. I was right in my conjectures.

WID.

WID. [*aside.*] I knew her all the while. Let us revenge ourselves, for her impertinence.

Miss M. Yet she was not particular in her attentions.

Miss FLIM. No ; her insolence was totally indiscriminating.

Miss M. There seemed to be a good deal of wit in her repartees.

WID. For my part, I thought her extreme vulgarity the only support of her character.

Miss FLIM. Yet I wonder she had not some imagination ; for they told me she was a dresser at one of the Theatres.

Miss M. [*aside.*] Malicious toads ! [*Aloud.*] Now I am sure you knew her to be a rival beauty, by your innuendoes.

Miss FLIM. And if I did, madam, let me tell you, there are few beauties capable of exciting the flames of jealousy in my breast.

Miss M. Happy creature !

Lord FIL. [*behind, with a sigh.*] O Lord ! I wish they would go away ; for if they stay for ever, I must not part with Chloe ; and I don't feel myself in the most enviable situation.

WID. Well, my dear, we must not trifle away our time : We came to take you with us to my Lord Rentless's auction.

Miss M. I have no money to throw away at auctions.

WID. I like that, of all things. Come, come, you never can be more elegantly suited ; the furniture only aired, as one may say ; perfectly modern, and not a pin the worse for wear. I am monstrous sorry for her Ladyship, I protest ; I have not a dearer friend in the world. She will expire, no doubt, at the loss of her beloved exotics, birds and quadrupeds.

Miss FLIM. They really say (but I can scarcely believe it) that there is a parrot that can make charades ; and a
divine

divine monkey that reads Homer. I am sure you'll be tempted.

Miss M. Well, but ladies, you have not said a word to my Lord Filligree. We must not leave so amiable an escort behind us.

Miss FLIM. Well, I vow! If there is not my Lord Filligree!

WID. How could you be so cruel, my Lord, to lie so long *perdu!* but you are so agreeably engaged, I see.

Lord FIL. I thought I should surprize you....He he he!

Miss M. There is a docile and obedient humble servant, for you.

Miss FLIM. Yes, I declare, it is a vast mark of affection. You know there is an old proverb, that says, "Love me, love my dog."

Miss M. Without partiality, now, don't you think his Lordship is an excellent representative of Hercules employed with a distaff and spindle, in obedience to the commands of his mistress?

Miss FLIM. On my conscience, so he is! That is the man who killed so many people with the jaw-bone of an ass.... Yes, yes, I know the story perfectly; and I never saw so striking a similitude. Ha ha ha!

Miss M. and WID. Ha ha ha!

Lord FIL. Go, you naughty things, you are laughing at me; but I shall be even with you some time. Heavens and earth! Get away, you filthy animal.

*[Throws down the dog, and brushes
his clothes with a look of horror.]*

Miss M. Hey day! What is the matter now? The inhuman savage! I dare say he has killed my dog! Speak, my darling; and tell me if it is alive!

Miss FLIM. [*apart to the Widow*] I always thought her a fool.

WID. [*aside.*] And if this is not demonstration.....

Lord FIL. May I cease to breathe, if I am not chagrined *a la mort*. But such an enormous flea! O! mercy!....I don't believe I shall be comfortable again this half year.

Miss M. A mighty fuss, indeed, about nothing. Lord, one would think you had never combed a puppy before....GoI shall not endure you in my sight this age. But my displeasure is a trifle, I suppose, in comparison with a flea-bite.

Lord FIL. What can I say for myself?

Miss M. Pray, ladies, carry him with you to the auction; and leave me to the recovery of my spirits.

WID. Willingly....We will take compassion on the unfortunate knight.

Lord FIL. I am in such a dilemma!....If the sincerest contrition.....

Miss M. Ah! you cruel wretch! You know I cannot do without you in the evening. So begone in silence, and return a penitent.

Lord FIL. [*aside.*] That is a consolatory intimation, however.

LADIES. Adieu, my love....May you soon see an end of your misfortunes.

[*Exeunt all but Miss Mansfield.*]

Miss M. Be sure to commend me to the parrots and the monkies.....There, go your ways, and make the most of my folly, or you will deprive me of its highest *gout*. Such tongues have only the power of scandalizing by their praise. Here comes Sir Waldon, to chide me for my idleness, I suppose.

Enter

Enter Sir WALDON LEVINGTON.

Miss M. Dear guardy, may I flatter myself that you felt the absence of your tea-maker this morning.

Sir WAL. Have you the humility to think, that a man who has experienced the pleasure of your company, can feel the loss of it without concern?....But the motive of my visit was to give you joy on the arrival of this happy day.

Miss M. Yes, guardy, "this is a day indeed!" Look at the Sun; does he not "shine like a beau in a new birth-day suit?"

Sir WAL. He rather brings to my mind, the idea of a smiling bridegroom, leading to the altar the loveliest of her sex.

Miss M. Fie, guardy! How you flatter a poor girl! But do you really think there is any similitude in his present brightness, with the swarthy complexion and dusky beard of my little Israelite? Or, pray inform me, is Phœbus particularly famous for a good set of teeth?

Sir WAL. A good set of teeth!....Phœbus!....What can you mean by so strange and out-of-the-way a question?

Miss M. Only, because my dear Lord Filligree never seems to laugh with any other intention than that of shewing the double row of polished ivory, arranged so regularly within his vermillion lips.

Sir WAL. Fie, chary! At this rate I shall scarcely think my own character out of the reach of your satirical talents.

Miss M. You must not be angry, guardy. To confess the truth, I do take a few liberties with it now and then, just to amuse my friends.

Sir WAL. I am infinitely obliged to you! It is a great pleasure, to be sure, to be entertaining.

Miss M. Come, you must not look cross ; for I can't help it, you know.

Sir WAL. But do not you think it is time to grow more sedate, and leave off these childish ways, when you are going to take upon yourself the command of a great estate ?

Miss M. Yes, guardy ; and, what is better, the command of a husband ! with his great estate to boot.

Sir WAL. [*aside.*] Command of a husband ! I see the young lady has a good notion of life. Then you have decided at last between the merits of the two ?

Miss M. You say, they are equally rich, guardy ?

Sir WAL. Very nearly : One has somewhat the larger income at present ; but then the other in reversion.

Miss M. What a pity it is that I cannot marry them both !

Sir WAL. Nay, nay, chary ; that is being too unreasonable in your wishes.

Miss M. But only think how charming it would be, to have so much more money than one could tell what to do with !

Sir WAL. You are grown wonderfully prudent, all of a sudden !

Miss M. It is from the force of your admirable precepts. Now, guardy, only suppose I should do some silly thing at last, like a giddy chit as I used to be, and throw myself away upon some poor fellow, after all ! What a joke it would be for all my affectionate friends ! “ Poor old gentleman ! ” then they would say of you, “ How all his advice has been thrown away ! ” Then it would make a charming paragraph !

Sir WAL. No doubt....the world might well sneer !

Miss M. And who knows but there might be somebody wicked enough to say, “ I'm glad of it, it is no more than
the

the old curmudgeon deserves, for expecting a fine girl" (They would praise me, you know, for the sake of throwing the more blame upon you) "for expecting a fine girl, with five thousand pounds a year, to sacrifice herself to a frightful old Jew, with his shent per shent conshols; or an insignificant, lipping fribble, "Why were you not at the Opera last night? There was all the beau monde, except yourself; the heat was so oppressive, I thought I should have expired....He he he!"

Sir WAL. But we shall disappoint them of their entertainment.

Miss M. To be sure....Nothing delights me more, than to disappoint people who would gratify their favourite passion, at the expence of my happiness.

Sir WAL. And all fair too, chargy. [*Laughing and nodding*

Miss M. So it is, guardy. *significantly at each other.*

Sir WAL. This is a change beyond my hopes. You used to be so deluded by any melancholy tale, that I was afraid you would have thrown yourself and fortune away both together.

Miss M. Nay, guardy; not so bad as that: I have now and then cast some loose silver into the hat of an importunate beggar; but that is very different from making an alms-deed of one's person, you know.

Enter BETTY, with a band-box.

Miss M. Put down the things, and I will speak to you presently.

Sir WAL. No, no; though you steal my thoughts from my own business, sometimes, I will not interrupt yours. I know you will have your hands full against the evening.

Miss

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Miss

Miss M. You are the most gallant man. [*Exit Sir WAL.*]

Miss M. Let me see what you have brought me from Mrs. La Blonde. It will do, very well. I shall see nobody this evening in whose eyes I wish to appear particularly enchanting. You may take away the box. I have no further orders for you till I dress for dinner.

BETTY. [*aside.*] O! that I could put in a word about the fortin-teller now. I forgot, ma'am....I forgot....that is, I forgot....to, to mention....that Mr. Mortimer presents his compliments to you.

Miss M. Is he in London! And had John the intolerable stupidity to deny me to Mr. Mortimer?

BETTY. No, sure, ma'am; I met the Captain myself, as I was going to Mrs. La Blonde.

Miss M. You met him, did you!....Well, and what then?

BETTY. Nothing at all, then, ma'am; he sent his compliments....that was all.

Miss M. How provoking!....And where is he to be found?

BETTY. Indeed, ma'am, I don't know....Ought I to have axed him where he lodged?

Miss M. Asked him where he lodged, indeed!

BETTY. I am sure I would have axed him, with all the pleasure in the world, if I had knowed you wished it.

Miss M. You could not suppose that I wished you to ask any gentleman where he lodged!

BETTY. O no, ma'am, to be sure....I never did think no such thing.

Miss M. Heavens! How I am exposing myself to my servant!....Well, you may go. It is of no consequence....Heigho! What would I give to find out....

[*Throws herself in a chair, in a musing posture: Betty loiters about, as wishing to speak, but wanting resolution.*]

BETTY.

BETTY. Dear, ma'am ! If you would not be wery angry, I could tell you how to find out any manner of thing.

Miss M. Indeed ! That must be a valuable secret, upon my word. But how came you to be favoured with such an extraordinary treasure ?

BETTY. It is not I, ma'am, that knows so much ; but there is....there is....If it vas not for the old voman's inwisible ancient, now....O gemini !....But there is an old voman, ma'am.

Miss M. O, I understand you !....A fortune-teller....And what proofs may she have given you of her wisdom, pray ?

BETTY. I cannot remember half the vonderful things she told me ; but amongst the rest, she said, I should some time or other be my Lady Mayoress.

Miss M. An unquestionable testimony of her foresight, to be sure.

BETTY. But, then, I'm to marry an officer first ; and I think I have him in my eye already.

Miss M. It would be a ridiculous frolic ; or I vow I should like to talk to the old Beldam, of all things....Does she live in a creditable part of the town ?

BETTY. Only, on t'other side the Park.

Miss M. And there is nothing else to apprehend ?

BETTY. Not that I know of....the room, indeed, is a little dark.

Miss M. Ha ha ha ! Poor Betty....If I go, child, it will only be to enjoy a laugh ; and I do believe, that in some idle hour I shall take it in my head to accompany you.

BETTY. Dear, ma'am, could not you take a valk this morning.

Miss M. Impossible ; I have a thousand other things to think of....In the mean time, I wish you could find out Mr.

Mor-

Mortimer's abode, that I might send him a card for this evening.

BETTY. Suppose I was to ax the Penny-post?....I vonce found out a cousin of mine that vay.

Miss M. I don't think you could have hit upon a better method: he will knock at the door in a few minutes, do you watch, and neglect not to make the inquiry. If it should not succeed....Why then....it will be of no great consequence, you know. [Exit.

BETTY. No, sure, ma'am, not of the least consequence. [Exit on the other side.

SCENE II....*Another apartment in the same house.*

Enter Miss HASTINGS, in second mourning: A servant reaches her a chair, on which she throws herself, in much agitation.

SERVANT. Rest yourself here, madam, if you please. I will inform my mistress, and I doubt not she will attend you immediately. [Exit.

Miss Has. Alas! To what a state of humiliation am I reduced, by the treachery of an infamous woman? Should Miss Mansfield be deaf to my supplications!....But wherefore should I doubt the interior merits of a book, that bears so fair an index?....There is something auspicious too in the civility of her servants.

Enter Miss MANSFIELD, speaking to a servant within the scene.

A lady in affliction, say you!....My dear Miss Hastings, is it you! What is the matter! Repose your troubles in my breast, and be assured they shall become my own. If I cannot chace them away, I will share them, at least, and make their
their

their weight more supportable by dividing it. I will lay my life, it proceeds from the ungentle temper of your precious cousin.

Miss HAS. My dear madam, benevolence, alert as yours, whilst it excites a boundless gratitude, takes away all possibility of expressing it.

Miss M. Then is my wonderful benevolence endued with a wonderful stock of prudence, to spare itself the task of hearing eulogiums which it does not deserve. Come, let me hear what extraordinary exertions you are going to exact from it.

Miss H. I believe you already know, that on the sudden death of an uncle, on whose kindness my dependence was entirely placed, I was thrown destitute on the bounty of Mrs. Freelove.

Miss M. Alas! a miserable resource!....And had you no other friend, who would have been happy to have yielded you assistance in your distress?

Miss HAS. I had, indeed, one friend, to whom I could have applied for counsel, though not for protection....but he was absent, and I was driven, by the licentious importunities of a young gentleman in the country, presuming I suppose on my poverty, to accept precipitately the asylum which she alone had offered me.

Miss M. And she then led you the life of a slave, I suppose. O! you are too gentle for her....I wish she had had to deal with me.

Miss HAS. A little petulance of temper I could have borne, had she not entered into a league with my tormentor, and actually accepted a bribe from him this night to betray me into his power.

Miss M. Good heavens! To what a pitch of infamy is it possible for human nature to attain! Another Freelove would make me renounce my sex. Well, as I trust we are arrived

at the acme of female perfidiousness, now for the name of the hero of this respectable conspiracy?....I guess you have not regard enough for the owner, to make a secret of it.

Miss HAS. O! no....It is Charles Mortimer....and, believe me, I care not to what extent the villainy belonging to it is exposed.

Miss M. [*aside.*] Charles Mortimer!....This is a stroke for which I was utterly unprepared.

Miss HAS. Bless me!....What has affected you?....Are you seized with some sudden indisposition?

Miss M. He....hem....No....nothing....nothing at all....A little pinch, by way of retribution, I suppose, for the dissipation of last night. But what were you saying of Charles Mortimer!....Is it possible, that he should have insulted you with dishonourable addresses!....His manners seem to denote.....

Miss HAS. Yet, detestable as his manners are, they are infinitely surpassed by the depravity of his heart.

Miss M. His manners!....Do you really think his manners so detestable?

Miss HAS. There cannot, sure, be two opinions on the subject. The meanest of your servants would suffer an injury, in being compared with him.

Miss M. Is it possible, that prejudice can so mislead the understanding!....If I have the least knowledge of good breeding, Charles Mortimer is the most elegant young man I ever saw....I confess, I see nothing in him that might [*with an air of pique*] disgrace a groom by the comparison.

Miss HAS. We cannot mean the same person.

Miss M. O! yes....I am well acquainted with Charles Mortimer; I often danced with him at Bath; and he is lately arrived in town....There can be no mistake as to the person.

Miss

Miss HAS. Of his arrival in town, I have been too well assured, to the distress and anguish of my heart.

Miss M. [*aside.*] And how lately did I flatter myself, that his arrival was to secure the felicity of mine!

Miss HAS. Besides, he did tell me, he had been seeking for me in Bath.

Miss M. Seeking for you in Bath! [*Aside.*] What a situation am I in!

Miss HAS. My dear madam, notwithstanding my own provocations, I would not have expressed my sentiments so freely, had I known he was a friend of yours. Perhaps an attachment, which I am not ashamed to confess, to a man with a disposition most diametrically opposite, may, in some degree, have added to my disgust.

Miss M. O! If you are in love, the wonder ceases....Love is allowed to be blind, all the world over.

Miss HAS. [*aside.*] So it seems, indeed!

Miss M. Come, pray tell me the name of your Philander?

Miss HAS. His name is Henry Piercy. He is the son of the rector of the parish where my uncle lived. We were brought up together. But since he has entered into orders, he has lived on a small curacy in Northamptonshire....Yet, poor as he is, his letters are always comfortable, and inspire me with a hope of better days.

Miss M. [*aside.*] What a sad thing it is, that two amiable people should be unhappy for the lack of a little paltry gold!....[*Muses.*]....Delightful! A thought occurs to me, by which I can relieve all their difficulties at once.

Miss HAS. You take too deep an interest, I fear, in my misfortunes.

Miss M. Not at all....If the tender passion were not to encounter a few difficulties, it would be too maukish and insipid....I, on my own part, could a tale unfold.....

Miss H. I doubt it not....Some happy mortal, amongst the train of your admirers, must, ere this, have stolen an interest in your susceptible heart.

Miss M. Alas! Poor luckless maiden, that I am....the foe comes doubly armed against me....In each hand a bow, and strikes my too tender heart with two piercing arrows at the same time....In short, it is my hapless destiny, to be equally in love with two...and which of them I am to marry, this portentous evening will discover.

Miss HAS. If I could read the temper of your governing planet, in the brightness of your countenance, I should pronounce it most benign.

Miss M. Alas! You are but a poor augur. I feel something here that speaks a truth so contrary to your interpretation, that I fear my brilliant countenance has the sin of hypocrisy to answer for. Tell me, my sweet Maria, were I to rob you of the heart of your Piercy, should I mess with you, without having to fear a dose of ratsbane infused in my soup?

Miss HAS. How can so wild an idea have entered your imagination? No, however I may once have failed in augury, I will venture to predict, that jealousy is a fiend incapable of affecting us with its malignity.

Miss M. Bravo! If you improve so rapidly, you will soon be an adept in the science of divination. But come, my tambour-frame is in my dressing-room....So far I will agree with you, that a friendship founded upon principle, nothing less than a dereliction of principle can impair. [Exeunt.]

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I....*Part of the Park, before the Fortune-teller's Door.*

Enter BETTY, out of breath.

BETTY.

O! Gemini!....Vhat a race I have had! If that there Mr. Frizz had seen me turn the corner, though he is too conceited to speak to a body, on occasion, he would humble himself to feed his curosimy, I varrant him; and I should have been so flustrated!....Dear, dear....to see the ways of the world. Vhat upstarts can give themselves the airs of gentlefolk!....For all he boasts of his edication at the Free-school, it vas but the other day, when I seed him myself vell drubbed by the butler at Sir Gregory Gobble's, for dipping his fingers in a mock turtle.....

[FRIZZ *steals in behind, and listens to her soliloquy unseen.*]

It is time I larns to import myself as becomes my great prospects in life!

FRIZZ. [*aside.*] Her great prospects in life.

BETTY. When I am the Captain's lady, though I may be none of the richest, mayhap, I hopes I shall be in a sitivation to look down upon such mean fellers as Mr. Frizz.....

FRIZZ. [*aside.*] Mr. Frizz is your most obedient, humble servant.

BETTY. And then, at the death of my first husband....

FRIZZ. [*aside.*] What the devil!...I suppose she intends to cast them off like her apparel.

BETTY.

BETTY. Dear creature ! it will be a pity too ; he vill deserve a vhole twelvemonth's mourning. But when I am my Lady Mayoress, and gives my annooval Ball at the Mansion-house, vonce a year, I believe I shall cut a figure with the best. But I must have some lessons from the dancing-master first.

FRIZZ. [*aside.*] It will be necessary, I believe.

Enter a GIRL, from the Fortune-teller's House.

BETTY. What you are comed at last. Is Goody Peervell at home, and quite alone ? I am in a monstrous hurry, and have great news for her. My mistress has promised to come herself.

FRIZZ. [*aside.*] The devil she has !....That's a piece of information that shall soon be transmitted to mine. It will be a crown in my way, at least. [*Advancing just as she is going to enter the bouse.*] Your humble servant, sweet Mrs. Eliza Tattlewell ! you are going to take a peep into the regions of futurity, I perceive. If I should not intercept your great prospects in life, I should like to take my share of fair promises, and have my fortune told at the same time.

BETTY. I desires no such liberties with me, Mr. Frizz. If you vants your fortune told, with all my heart ; but I am not comed of no such errands, let me tell you ; or if so be that I vas, there's no disparagement in it. I know ladies that holds their heads higher than I do, that is not above inquiring of larned historiographers and cunning navigators, vhat their distiny has in store for them.

FRIZZ. Ladies that hold their heads higher than you do ! Then they must be two feet taller at the least. If any lady of your stature, from St. James's Square to London Bridge, carries her head higher than you do, she must walk upon stilts.

[*Aside.*]

[*Aside.*] Now to put madam's heroics to the proof. [*Aloud.*] My peerless princess! Despise these lying fabricators of castles in the air, and trust to my art magic, by which I will not only tell your fortune, but undertake to make it for you.

BETTY. You, indeed! You pretend for to make my fortune....You forget who you are talking to, young man.

FRIZZ. You wrong me. I turn up my eyes to you, with the most profound respect. But, my angelic Eliza, a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush; and though I am neither a Captain nor a Lord Mayor, my profession is not without its perquisites.

BETTY. Ah! Mr. Frizz, if you was always so civil now. But don't you remember, when last we met, how fine and finicking you was; spying at me through a glass, and taking on as if you had never set eyes on me before.

FRIZZ. It was only to try you, my dear....The quarrelling of lovers is only a renewal of love, you know.

BETTY. I am sure, if I had knowed sooner, what a kindness you had for me, I would not have behaved so ungracious.

FRIZZ. Condescending angel! But, as I was saying, my place is not an unprofitable one, let me tell you.

BETTY. No, marry....If fame is not a liar, you are a great favourite with the Widow.

FRIZZ. Fie, fie!....don't be jealous....My income, however, is not a contemptible one. It will enable me to keep you a one-horse chair, and a snug apartment for the summer months at Islington, Chelsea, or some *rural* situation of that sort.

BETTY. Charming! A one-horse chaise may be made a very comfortable conveyance, with an apron and a hood to it....

[*Aside.*] A fig for the old woman's promises!....This is more than the pay of an insign could do....Then, to be sure, he is

a pretty

a pretty feller....[*Aloud.*] Laws, Mr. Frizz, you have such a vay with you. But when vee are married, I hope you will leave off flirting with my Lady Hobnail's voman.

FRIZZ. Married, child!....What has put that exploded idea into your head?....When do you hear of men of fashion marrying, in these days?.....No, no; it is so much more the thing to keep a Miss.....

BETTY. Feller, I despise you!....A Miss, indeed!....And to a bit of an insignificant skipjack of a footman!....I would fain see some betterer person make me such an offer. Open the door, child, and let me in; for I don't like to be seen in low company. [*Exit, with the Girl.*]

FRIZZ. Ha ha ha! Poor Mrs. Elizabeth!....How she is perplexed with the multiplicity of her ideal honours! [*Exit.*]

SCENE II....*An Apartment at Sir Waldon Levington's.*

Enter Miss MANSFIELD and Miss HASTINGS.

Miss M. So, you will persuade yourself, that I have a secret passion lurking at the bottom of my heart!....You must think me most incorrigibly stupid, not to have profited more by the instructions of Sir Waldon, who has no regard for any earthly blessings, but such as may be extracted from a gold mine....No, no; however irresistible the hood-winked deity may appear to you, I am invulnerable to the sharpest arrow in his quiver, and defy his power.

Enter Servant.

SERV. Mr. Mortimer will have the honour of waiting on you, madam, if you are at leisure.

Miss M. Surely my traitorous tongue has not conjured up an apparition!....[*To Servant*] Shew him up. [*Exit Servant.*]

Miss HAS. Mr. Mortimer!.....I tremble at the name.

Miss

Miss M. Now, Maria, we have an opportunity of humbling your tormentor....I will confront him first; then you shall make your appearance, and I will withdraw. Fly, fly; I hear his foot upon the stairs!....Remain in that closet till I call for you.

Mrs HAS. I do not think I shall have courage for the undertaking.

Miss M. Pshaw! pshaw!....Let resentment give you spirit.

[*Miss Hastings retires.*]

Enter Sir CHARLES MORTIMER.

Sir CHA. Your most obedient. I hope I need not so far distrust the evidence of my eyes, as to suppose, that indisposition caused Miss Mansfield's sudden return from Bath, which cast a gloom over all her acquaintance there.

Miss M. Some of her acquaintance have had the prudence to seek a speedy consolation, I beli eve.

Sir CHA. Alas!...If it were a crime for a wretch in affliction to seek relief, who would leave the world with a clear conscience?

Miss M. [*aside.*] His hypocrisy and impudence confound me.... [*Aloud.*] Who, indeed! if that relief is only to be found in the detestable arts of intrigue and seduction!

Sir CHA. Good heavens!....What fiend has been traducing me to your ears? If there is any artifice couched beneath the ardent esteem which I bear Miss Mansfield.....

Miss M. Miss Mansfield, Sir, is totally indifferent to your artifices; nor can she otherwise be affected by them, than through the medium of a tender friendship for one they have vainly sought to injure. If you find any ambiguity in my expressions, I will introduce a lady, who will speak a lan-

guage more intelligible. [*Open sibe closet-door, speaks to Miss Hastings, as she enters, and then retires.*] Spare him not : make a libertine tremble at the just resentment of insulted innocence. [*Exit.*]

Miss HAS. A stranger !....Miss Mansfield !....[*Calls faintly.*] She has left me in the most embarrassing situation !

Sir CHA. Hold, madam, permit me to prolong an interview, with which you have so kindly honoured me, till you have condescended to inform me, by what extraordinary means I have deserved your *very* favourable representation of my character to Miss Mansfield !....A man's villainy must be diffuse, indeed, when it extends to a lady whose name and person are totally unknown to him.

Miss HAS. Indeed, Sir, I feel myself in such a distressing dilemma, that I am scarcely able to answer your inquiry.... The similarity of a name has involved me in a gross mistake ; and all the reparation I can make, for the unintentional injury I have done you, is to ask your pardon.

Sir CHA. Ask my pardon !....My lovely enemy !....It is not in the heart of a soldier to hear so humiliating a word from the lips of beauty unmoved. [*Takes her band.*]

Enter Miss MANSFIELD hastily.

Miss M. [*aside.*] If he should be impertinent, she will be terrified....Am I awake !....Smiling and pressing of hands !.... This is a spirited resentment, indeed !....Deceitful girl !

Miss HAS. Your generosity only adds to my confusion.

Sir CHA. Let us think no more of what has passed....I can easily divine from whence your error has arisen.

Miss M. [*aside.*] They do not want the company of a third person, by way of mediator, I see ; and though my heart

heart is breaking, I scorn to seek its relief at the expence of a meanness, into which, for a moment, I have been betrayed.

[Exit, unseen.]

Miss HAS. Notwithstanding your consideration and politeness, I shall never reflect on the injustice I have been hurried into, without concern.

Sir CHA. Only have the goodness to eradicate the unfavourable impression of me, which you have innocently fixed in the bosom of your angelic friend; and I shall ever hold myself your debtor.

Miss HAS. That will be an easy task; she will be no less pleased than surprised, no doubt, on discovering the blunder I have been guilty of.

[Exit.]

Sir CHA. Ah, no; alas! Miss Mansfield is incapable of being affected by *my* actions; yet there was an eagerness in the declaration, that....'Sdeath! what a fool I am, to give way to this soothing infatuation. "Love will hope where reason would despair;" or on the very day, on which she has promised to obey her guardian, and accept one of the sordid wretches of his choice....did she not mistake me for a beggar, it would be no inexcusable vanity to suppose I might put to flight either of my formidable rivals:....but to be esteemed a mere appendage to a good estate.....D..n...n!.... Sooner would I cut down my timber, sell my lands, convert them into halfpence, and disseminate the humble metal amongst the mob. But here she comes, with an unrelenting austerity on her brow. Though she may not *care* for my innocence, she will surely have the justice to *acknowledge* it.

Enter Miss MANSFIELD, and Miss HASTINGS.

Miss HAS. My dear Miss Mansfield, come and assist me in atoning for my false accusations. This gentleman is entirely ignorant of the practices with which I have erroneously charged him.

Miss M. He does not seem, indeed, a person against whom you entertain any insurmountable animosity.

Miss HAS. [*aside.*] Jealous, as I live. [*Aloud.*] I fear, I should be deemed somewhat illiberal, if I did....never having had the honour of seeing him before.

Miss M. Indeed! Then this is not the monster with whom a groom or stable-boy would blush to be compared.... [*Aside.*] Should I have been deceived, at last!.... [*Aloud.*] It is a strange adventure.

Sir CHA. And yet it may be easily explained. My gossips, and those of a hopeful cousin, being, unfortunately for me, of the same mind in the choice of a name, this is not the first time I have had the honour of being his representative. It was but the other day I had the favour of a challenge served up with my breakfast, for which I was entirely obliged to my unknown kinsman.

Miss M. Instead of helping Maria to atone for her error, I perceive it is my duty to plead for myself, who, having had the honour of being acquainted with Captain Mortimer, am without an excuse for my credulity; unless it may be admitted, as something in my favour, that the most prevailing foible of our sex, is not too zealous a vindication of each other. Shake hands, however, and assure me of your forgiveness.

Sir CHA. [*kissing her hand with rapture.*] Bewitching angel! Whenever you offend, it can only be to give greater variety to your attractions.

Miss

Miss M. Hold, hold! Devouring my hand was not one of the articles of reconciliation [*Aside.*] I did not observe that Maria's wrist was in danger of dislocation....there is some comfort in that.

Sir CHA. But to change the subject....Suffer me to congratulate myself on having the felicity of beholding Miss Emma Mansfield, which I apprehended it would never more be my fortune to enjoy.

Miss M. Ha ha ha!....What you thought I had forfeited the name!....Sir Waldon is anxious to see me comfortably settled. But wherefore did you apprehend it? You have friendship enough for me, I flatter myself, to take a part in my happiness! I am going to make a very *prudent* connexion.

Sir CHA. The world gives you all possible credit for *that* exemplary virtue. [*Aside.*] Take a part in her happiness!....Merciful heaven!....I shall go mad.

Miss M. [*aside.*] How I enjoy his agitation!

Sir CHA. Yet, if I am rightly informed, the world is still in suspence, with regard to the peculiar favourite of fortune, who is the object of your preference!

Miss M. Not only the world in general, but the favoured gentleman himself, I believe, is as perfectly unconscious of his happiness as you are.

Sir CHA. Pardon me; I had the honour of being introduced to the two amiable rivals, this morning; and each seemed equally confident of success.

Miss M. O! If you have seen the gentle Strephons, you will be able to conjecture, without my assistance, which is the dear, dear man.

Sir CHA. I never was more at a loss....Their merits appear to be so equally balanced.

Miss

Miss M. Not upon the scale of affection, my good Sir ; the difference may be imperceptible to a disinterested person ; but to the eye of love, the man to whom my heart awards the tenderest preference, appears so infinitely more amiable than the rest of his sex, that for my part, you must excuse me, Sir, I do not believe any body [*with an air of pique*] but yourself could be insensible of his superiority.

Sir CHA. [*aside.*] Is it possible that avarice itself can have acquired such a dominion over the senses of a woman !

SONG.

MISS MANSFIELD.

PRAY look at my Lord, and observe what an air,
A poor silly maiden's soft heart to trepan !
So gentle, so winning, so sweet, and so fair....
So fond....of himself too.....and doubt, if you can,
With grace so bewitching, that he is the man.

With beard so well cut, and so spruce, see the Jew,
With an eye like a gem, and complexion so wan....
Though shtocks are advanshing, and dividends due,
Sho fond....of his gold too....and doubt, if you can,
With monish sho plenty, that he is the man.

So useful's the beau, he can teach me to dress,
Stick patches, turn curls, or give airs to my fan ;
Work ruffles, knot fringes, or Chloe caress....
So fond....of himself too....and doubt, if you can,
With grace so bewitching, that he is the man.

No pigeon's the Jew, though he may be a rook....
But never mind that, getting money's the plan :....
If his coffers be full, I may share in a look.
Now you've heard their perfections....pray guess, if you can,
The Beau or the Broker....which, which is the man !

Miss

Miss M. Capt. Mortimer, happening to hear of your arrival in town, I just now sent you a card of invitation to a ball this evening. May I hope for the honour of your company?

Sir CHA. It is a temptation which I have not the power to withstand; and it offers me another opportunity of bidding you adieu, before my return to the continent.

Miss M. Return to the continent!....Did not you tell me, that there was not the most remote probability of your regiment being sent abroad again during the present war?

Sir CHA. I did so....But adverse fortune, withholding from me the choicest blessings of my native soil, I find myself unable to endure the punishment of Tantalus any longer.

Miss M. Then you will visit me merely *pour prendre congé*! Well, be it so. Though you have not friendship enough for me, to stay and give my hand away at the altar, or dance at *my* wedding, I trust you will allow me the honour of being a guest at *yours*?

Sir CHA. [*aside.*] Mine! Alas! it has received its death-wound in the distinction....[*Aloud.*] Whenever I marry, madam, I trust my bride will have too much discretion to solicit so dangerous a favour.

Miss M. Did you ever hear any thing so rude, Maria?
[*To Sir CHA.*] You almost provoke me to wish you may live and die a bachelor.

Miss HAS. [*apart to Miss M.*] Nor should I be surprised if you did, after so extraordinary an exclusion.

Sir CHA. Yet I may safely enter into any engagement, that is only to be fulfilled on the day of my marriage. Good morning to you, ladies; time, envious of my short-lived pleasures, obliges me to tear myself away. In the evening, I shall obey your commands.

Miss

Miss M. And be sure to come an hour earlier than fashion usually assembles her votaries.

Sir CHA. I shall wait on you, with my friend Burton.

[Exit.

Miss M. It is but a savage business, this slaying of the million to save the life of an individual.

Miss HAS. In truth, it is. I pity the unfortunate; and, amongst the rest, the gallant Captain has not the smallest share of my commiseration.

Miss M. Lord, child! do you number him amongst the vanquished?....Never fear....He will be treated honourably as a prisoner of war....For Mercy's sake, let us chace away these *triste* ideas....Shall we lounge away half an hour in the Shakspeare Gallery?

Miss HAS. I am at your disposal....Though, to confess the truth, I would rather scribble a line to Henry Piercy; just to inform him of the events.....

Miss M. I would not deprive deary of his billet-doux for the world...But be sure to mention the church living we were talking about.

Miss HAS. Was there ever such benevolence!....But, my dear Miss Mansfield, only consider; that you know nothing of Mr. Piercy, but from my partial representation.

Miss M. Well, then, bid him come and thank me; and I shall be better acquainted with him. And be sure you tell him to bring a florid string of elegiac verses, in honour of the wonderful merit of giving away what I can make no better use of. Though I might look vastly well in a band, and gown and cassock: So perhaps you would have me keep the advowson for myself. Away to your writing-desk; and learn to do as you are bid.

[Exit Miss Hastings.

Miss

Miss M. And now have I a whole solitary hour upon my hands, to fill up with meditation; a resource never so hateful to me as at this moment of suspense.

Enter BETTY, with Miss MANSFIELD's bonnet and shawl.

Miss M. What do you want!

BETTY. Vhy, madam, to speak the truth, I thought if you should be alone, and had half an hour to spare, may be, you would be kind enough to remember your promise about the fortin-teller.

Miss M. You could not have hit on a luckier moment to remind me of her. I was longing for some folly, that would serve to kill time, and you have now enabled me to declare hostilities against the veteran for these two hours at least; and then

Approach, portentous ev'ning, mark'd by fate,
To end our quarrel or confirm our hate;
Whate'er it be, prepare me for my doom,
And give me earnest of the *time* to come.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I. *A dark Room at the Fortune-teller's.*

Enter an Old Woman, followed by a dirty Boy.

OLD WOMAN.

COME, hie thee, my lad, and help to make this apartment as horrible as if it were an antichamber to the devil's drawing-room....There, good Peter, hang up the lizard's skin; set down the hour-glass on the other side. Now cover the great chair with the black cloth; give me my magic wand, and a dirty pack of cards, and I shall be ready.

PETER. Suppose I burn a little brimstone? They say, the devil never appears but in a smoke.

OLD WOM. Well said, Peter; or if thou couldst transform thyself into one of his imps, it would be better still.

PETER. I can do that, easy enough. Have not you a black mask, with horns? which, with my chimney-sweeper's jacket.....

OLD WOM. But what will thou do for a cloven foot, sweet imp?

PETER. I can hide myself behind your chair; and only shew my horns when there is occasion.

OLD WOM. Od so! Here they are.

Enter

Enter Miss MANSFIELD and BETTY.

Miss M. Mercy on me! What an object!

BETTY. [*looking fearfully round.*] Vell, if ever I seed any thing so frightful! If my mistress vere not here, I do believe I should swoond.

Miss M. Pray, goody, are you the cunning woman, who can tell young maidens when they are to be married, with the first letter of their sweetheart's name?

OLD WOM. [*aside.*] This the wild creature I was to expect! I doubt Mrs. Betty has been playing me a trick! [*Points with her wand solemnly to a seat on one side for Miss M. and on the other for Betty, near which is the figure of a black cat.*]

BETTY. I beg pardon; but if it vas to save my life, I durst not sit near that ugly creatur.

Miss M. We will change places then....it is the same thing to me....[*Aloud to the Old Wom.*]....Mother, I am come to have my fortune told, I say!

OLD WOM. Have a little patience, young lady; you will incense the stars.

Miss M. I don't care a fig about the stars, or garters either, I shall be very well contented with a commoner.

OLD WOM. [*aside.*] O ho! The Jew is the favourite, I perceive. [*To Miss M.*] Well, well; and you shall have the very commoner your heart is fixed on....[*Aside.*] She's a downright idiot, I see.

Miss M. My charming Hecate! That is the best news I have heard this fortnight!....But will he love me dearly, in return?

OLD WOM. That he will....so dearly, that he will be ready to worship every foot of ground you are mistress of. But you interrupt my meditations....I must consult the stars, I tell

you, before I can make any further discoveries concerning your destiny.

Miss M. And I tell you, you may as well save yourself the trouble; for they know nothing about the matter. Lord!.... I thought all your intelligence came from below stairs.

OLD WOM. [*aside.*] Humph!....A little from the kitchen, the servant's hall, or the butler's pantry, is acceptable now and then, to be sure....[*Aloud.*] I have my familiars in the lower regions; it is uncertain where one may want a friend, you know.

[*The devil shews his horns just over Betty's head, who shrieks.*

Miss M. [*starting.*] Lord have mercy upon me! [*Recollecting herself.*] Betty, do not be alarmed, my good girl. You vile impostor, are you not ashamed of frightening the poor creature into fits?

OLD WOM. It is impossible to become acquainted with the secrets of futurity, without some supernatural assistance.

Miss M. There....you look a little better. Take courage. I'll lay my life, it is only the boy who let us in. Come, Mr. Belzebub, be kind enough to walk out of your hiding place. Ha ha ha! See here, Betty, this is one of the imps who were to have pinched you black and blue. Indeed, these dirty fingers might well be expected to leave a mark behind them!

BETTY. What a spirit my lady has! [*A loud rap at an outer door.*

OLD WOM. More company! What will become of me! Dear madam, do not have the cruelty to ruin an old woman!

Miss M. Never fear; though I love fun, I am not one of those evil geniuses that delight in mischief, I will make my retreat in silence. Or suppose you were to admit me as an invisible

invisible agent for half an hour, and let me take my station by the side of the little infernal, I should like to become familiar in more of the mysteries of so profound a science.

OLD WOM. Any thing to oblige your ladyship....I am at your mercy.

Enter a GIRL.

GIRL. There are two gentlemen below, inquire for the Fortin-teller....Must I tell 'em to come up stairs?

Miss M. Gentlemen! Then I believe I must give up the design.

OLD WOM. Do you know their names, child; or any thing about them?

GIRL. I've never seed neither of 'em afore. Von is a fine pretty gentleman, and smells as sweet as a posy; and t'other is as ugly....I believe in my heart he is von of the Jew folk, for I never seed nobody else vith such a beard on's chin.

Miss M. I'll lay my life, I know who they are! Admit them, I beseech you; I will instruct you what to say to them. But, hold....A better thought occurs to me....Off with your hood, goody. I shall make the best witch of the two, as you shall see. *[Throws off her bonnet and shawl, and puts on some of the old woman's things.]*

BETTY. What! My young lady going to turn fortin-teller!

OLD WOM. Dear ma'am, you would not demean yourself with my coarse apparel!

Miss M. Now for the long cloak....But what shall I do for a hump upon my back? I shall be a disgrace to the art magic, with a straight pair of shoulders. Is it impossible to make this scientific bunch transferable upon occasion? Ha ha ha! I do believe that for once in my life I shall be taken for a conjuror!

OLD

OLD WOM. What a comical lady your mistress is, Mrs. Betty! Surely she would not rob me of my business!

BETTY. Lord help you! She never robs nobody.

Re-enter GIRL.

GIRL. The gentlemen vill go away, if you don't make haste.

MISS M. Well, let me have all my magic implements about me; give me my wand and black book; those dear enchanting green spectacles; let the little demon take his place, and I shall be ready for them.

BETTY. What must I do with myself all the while?

MISS M. Retire with the Old Woman, to be sure. If you are seen, the mystery will be over. Begone, I hear them on the stairs.

[Exit Betty and Old Wom.]

Enter LORD FILLIGREE and MORDECAI.

LORD FIL. The Witch of Endor, by all that's horrible! Do you speak.

MOR. Maishtresh fortune-teller; my friend and I here comesh to purchase a little information, consharning....

MISS M. Hold!....Spare yourself the trouble of instructing me. My knowledge in the occult sciences informs me of your business. Your enquiries would concern a young woman in the parish of St. James. Stand aside, and, with this magic wand, you shall see me trace the initial letters of her name.

LORD FIL. E. M. by all the powers of magic!

MOR. Vhat an old shorsheresh!

MISS M. Shall I present the young lady in *propria persona* to your eyes? I could do it without any trouble, I assure you.

Lord

LORD FIL. I would as soon see the devil himself! I like no such conjurations! Pry'thee, Mordecai, let us go. Who knows what lengths the old hag may run with her incantations?

MOR. Vhat! and leave de five shillings and tree-pence behind us, for noting at all!

LORD FIL. I am in a trepidation!

MOR. Vee vantsh to shée no shpiritsh or apparitionsh :.... All vee vould know ish, de shentimentsh of de young lady.

MISS M. A very reasonable request, indeed! All you expect from me, then, is to know a woman's mind! Truly, I don't know another question so fit to puzzle a conjuror. It is ten to one she does not know it herself, or I think I should have as good a chance of guessing it, as any of my competitors in the black art.

MOR. O! If you dosh not undershtand your bushiness, vee are not peoplesh to be imposed upon.

MISS M. Imposed upon, do you say! Is it for this that I ride upon the winds, and live in smoke and brimstone! [*Waves her wand.*] Come forth, my little champion, and with thy mystic motions call up a host of fiends to vindicate thy injured power!

LORD FIL. For pity's sake! Mordecai, how could you be so presumptuous?

MOR. Vell, vell; you may be von of de best fortune-tellers in de vorld, for vhat I know! but I shall be shatished to have my monish again, and go about my bushiness, and my friend Thomshon here ish villing to do de shame.

MISS M. Friend Thomson! How I despise such shallow artifice! [*Comes down.*] Be it known to you, my pretty, little, mincing, finicking Lord Filligree, and you, Maishter Mordecai Mendoza, that, by the sublimity of my genius, I am
exalted

exalted above the reach of dissimulation....As for Miss Mansfield, she is too good for either of you; but as the fates have cruelly decreed.....

MOR. O! Vee know very vell dat she vill consent to marry von of ush, dish afternoon; but vvhich she vill choose, ish vvat vee vantsh to be acquainted vid?

Miss M. [*holding out her band.*] Only consider the difficulty of the question, and then, if you liberally advance.....

MOR. No, no; vee paid at the door....Ash for more monish, it ish out of de queshtion.

Lord FIL. We are afraid of pickpockets, and never carry superfluous cash about us.

Miss M. [*aside.*] Avaricious mortals!....Then let me tell you, Miss Mansfield has an utter aversion to a coward, and will never accept a man, who has not courage enough to protect her.

MOR. And dat can never be hish Lordship.

Miss M. Not unless he contrives to pick a quarrel as he goes home, and overcomes his antagonist.

Lord FIL. Alas! I am no fighter....But I could hire a porter to swear I had knocked him down.

Miss M. What!....Pretend to impose upon the fates! madam Atropos would nip the thread of your existence, with the first snap of her scissars, for the attempt.

MOR, O! It ish a shin to tell a lie!

Miss M. O! You would fight, no doubt, to oblige your mistress!

Lord FIL. No, pasitively no:...A man of fashion scorns to make a fuss about a woman....demme!

Miss M. Suppose Miss Mansfield was to hear you.

Lord

Lord FIL. She hear me....He he he!....Who would be the fool then?....No, no; I have another story for her ears.

MOR. It ish very plain, dat hish Lordship cannot be de man.

Miss M. And on the other hand, she is determined never to marry a man that wears a beard; and the stars are too merciful to force her inclinations in that point.

MOR. Vell, but shupposh her guardian.....

Miss M. Suppose her guardian should shut her up....Don't you think the fates could unlock the door?

Lord FIL. To be sure....I knew she would not marry a Jew.

Miss M. And then, she doats upon pork; eats it for breakfast, dinner, and supper....So that, unless you go home, shave yourself, and dine upon pork and pease-pudding, I would not give sixpence for your chance.

MOR. Vell, my comfort ish, dat a man may be a Jew at heart, though he hash a shmooth chin, and feeds upon shwine's flesh.

Lord FIL. At this rate, you destroy the hopes of both.

Miss M. Ah! But that is far from my intention....Let me see....There is a strange perplexity amongst your predominating planets....The constellations don't agree: Virgo is alarmed, Cor Caroli disturbed; Mercury, indeed, wears a favourable aspect; and Libra is impartial....In short, unless you will venture....unless, I say, you have both the fortitude (which I very much doubt) to see me turn over the leaves of my sable volume.....

Lord FIL. Fortitude! why what harm can you do us by turning over the leaves of a book!

Miss M. Take care what you say.....Only because it is the property of his infernal majesty....and the very act of using it, calls around me a whole legion of invisible de-

mons, with whom I hold communication, for the benefit of the less enlightened part of mankind.

LORD FIL. Then I would not see you touch it; to gain an empire.

MOR. Never mind; de shpiritsh are not to be sheen, you know....Open de book, good voman, by all means;....if dere ish any ting to be got by it.

MISS M. Be discreet....be guarded....I beseech you....Only listen now, as I throw back the cover on the table, and you will hear such a squeak and such a buz. [*Boy makes such a noise as she describes, and she speaks to him aside.*] That's a good boy....He knows his trade, I see.....[*Aloud.*] Aye, aye, here they come.

LORD FIL. I shall certainly expire.

MOR. I don't like it very vell, myself.

MISS M. Don't be afraid,.....Lean your heads down a little, and you will perceive a strong smell of brimstone.

LORD FIL. What is that figure that looks so like a black beetle? [*Looking over the book.*]

MOR. Beetle! Vhy dish ish noting in de vorld but a Hebrew manushcript....How ignorant are dese Chrishtians!....Let me shee....it ish a language I undershtand.

MISS M. Oh oh oh!....I am ruined and undone....It is polluted by the touch of an unclean hand....All my charms are broke....and a host of fiends let loose against me. Oh oh oh! [*The devil shews his horns.*]

LORD FIL. There is one of them, as I am a miserable sinner....I wish I was safe at the Horse-guards.

[*Runs out without his bat.*]

MOR. I believe it ish a trick, after all. I am not sho eashily terrified vid falsh fire....Vell, vee are not de firsht prudent peoplesh dat have been imposed upon.

[*Exit.*
Miss

Miss M. Stay, stay, and save me from the consequences of the mischief you have done.....Now to return the old woman her borrowed plumes....I flatter myself I have topped the character of a fortune-teller; and when I resume my own, may I support it with as appropriate an effect. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II....*A Room at the Widow Freelove's.*

Enter SQUIRE MORTIMER and FRIZZ.

SQUIRE. Your lady is in her dressing-room, I suppose, Master Frizz. But mayhap Miss Hastings is with her, and that won't be quite the thing; for I want a little confab in private, do you see. I had a devilish good scheme in my head; but I was so confoundedly hit, last night, that I doubt I have forgot the best part of it.

FRIZZ. You need not fear any intrusion....As for the young woman, she has left the family.

SQUIRE. What, stolen away!....So-ho!....So-ho!....Miss Maria, but I will be up with you yet, if you are above ground. But, hark ye, Master Frizz, are you sure there is no fetch....no underhand work, to raise the rates upon me?

FRIZZ. I am totally ignorant about the girl, upon my soul. I thought her pretty, but she wanted fashion. She has left her place: But if she has got another, probably my lady can inform you who has applied for her character.

SQUIRE. Character!....Why you don't take her for a chambermaid?

FRIZZ. Not I....I don't want to take her, in any character, I assure you; and if you do, you need not fear any rivalry on my part, upon my honour.

SQUIRE. Why that's hearty! One good turn deserves another; and if it should so fall out, do you see, you should not find me given to overlook past services. Come, usher me to

your lady, mayhap I may hear more from her....Egad, who knows but she has been beforeband with me, and playing my game all this while. Women's wit, they say, is as nimble as their tongues.

FRIZZ. Simon, conduct this gentleman to Mrs. Freelove's dressing-room. *[Takes snuff affectedly.]*

SQUIRE. I wish I could larn to be as easy as he is.... Dem'me, if there is not more gentility in a pinch of rappee, and a spying-glass, than in an hundred acres of arable and pasture! *[Exit.]*

FRIZZ. What a devilish blunder did madam Fortune make, when she placed that boor in a coach, and left me upon the foot-board. *[Exit.]*

SCENE III....*The Front of Mrs. Freelove's House.*

Sir WALDON enters, dressed very youthfully, and knocks at the door.

Sir WAL. Gad so!....If that young lady was not dressed so prim, and so like a Quaker, I should almost take her for my ward! Adad, and so it is; and there is Timothy, her footman, following her at a distance....I hope she won't come this way....if she discovers my penchant for the Widow, I shall never hear the last of it. I wish they would open the door....If I knock again, I shall call her attention.

Enter Miss MANSFIELD.

Miss M. Am I to believe my eyes!....Is that my dear old guardian, transformed into a beau garçon?....And waiting for admittance at the door of the Widow Freelove, as I live! O ho! There lies the talisman, that has wrought this wonderful metamorphosis.

Sir WAL. Metamorphosis, quoth-a!....Indeed, chargy, you make very free with your old guardian, as you are pleased to call

call him....Look at home, I pray you; a gentleman may wear a fashionable coat, I presume, without being ridiculed; when a young lady will walk about the streets in the dress of her chambermaid! But I see what you have been after; you will never mend....I'll hold my life, you have been throwing away your money on some idle vagrants, as usual.

Miss M. So I have, indeed, guardy....There is no denying the charge; but confession is a prelude to repentance; besides, to prove your maxims have not been altogether out of my mind, I have been fortunate enough to make one bargain in my way, that must turn to account.

Sir WAL. Bargain, indeed!....You have a pretty head for a bargain!....He he he!....What a piece of damaged lace, or a whole cargo of India fans, for the sake of the carved sticks of one, which will look immensely elegant with a new mount!

Miss M. This is entirely a business of speculation....You must know, as I was walking carelessly along, thinking no harm, I chanced somehow or other to tumble into a garret six stories high, I believe....[*As Sir W. is going to speak, she puts her hand on his mouth.*] (There is good luck in tumbling up stairs, you know.) And there I found a poor sick widow, with a helpless mother on one side, and five small children on the other. Now what do you think I did, in this situation?

Sir WAL. You got out of it, to be sure, as fast as you could....To think of your exposing yourself to infection, and I know not what.

Miss M. Why, guardy, if it were not for the good constitution of the body politic, what a risque would you be running daily upon Change!....So deeming myself in a similar predicament, I ventured to remain where I was, till I could take advantage of these poor people's necessities, and negotiate a loan with them.

Sir

Sir WAL. A loan !....What with a gang of paupers !.... Were you mad !

Miss M. But to prove myself a proper helpmate for my dear little Mordecai, I did not neglect to exshact mosht exhorbitant interesht for my monish.

Sir WAL. Interest !....Lord help you !....You must be grievously disordered in the upper story !

Miss M. Yes, as I told you before, all the disorder and poverty lay in the upper story ; but then, in a little apartment on the left side of the mansion, [*laying her hand on her heart*] you cannot think what feasting and enjoyment there has been, of the rich fruits of this adventure ; for I believe it is a commerce you don't understand, and I fear never will, or I would take you into partnership, with all my heart.

Sir WAL. Me, into partnership !....I hope I shall soon resign you to a partner, who will teach you more regard for your money, than to squander it away upon beggars.

Miss M. Well, but don't frown, sweet guardy ; don't frown, lest you never complete your partnership with the Widow.

Sir WAL. Frown !....Why you are enough to ruffle the temper of a philosopher !

Miss M. What are a few guineas out of my pocket, to your loss of a noble jointure ?....Smile, smile, my dear guardy !....You don't know how bewitching you look, with a smile upon your countenance.

Sir WAL. You sly rogue, you would wheedle a man out of his senses.

Miss M. There, that's the very thing....Give a loud rap at the door, while your features retain that captivating smirk, and the day is your own.

Sir WAL. Fie, fie !....How can you be so volatile !

Miss

Miss M. Have a care !....don't relapse !....There, that will do. Good bye, guardy. Success attend you. My humble duty to your bride. [Exit.

Sir WAL. Aye, aye, I knew she would be laughing. It is a strange thing that the tender passion, which creates so many pangs in the breast of a lover, should be such food for mirth to all the rest of the world. [Exit into the house.

SCENE IV....*A Room at Mrs. Freelove's, and discovers the*
WIDOW and SQUIRE MORTIMER.

SQUIRE. Odzooks, madam ! No tricks upon travellers ! Mayhap you thinks I am no gemman, and that I knows nothing of life, the world and the likes ; because I'm just comed from the country.

WID. If you'll take my advice, you'll return to it again. We shall never make any thing of you.

SQUIRE. Make any thing of me !....Egad, you shall not make a fool of me, I can tell you that....Produce the girl, or refund the money !

WID. You destroy my nerves with your impetuosity. If you won't hear reason, Mr. Mortimer, I shall be obliged to dispense with the honour of your company. Unless you learn more breeding, people of fashion can't admit you into their houses.

SQUIRE. But mayhap they may admit a bailiff into their houses. Refund the thousand pounds, or fulfil the articles of your engagement.

WID. Lord, man ! don't break the drums of my ears with roaring about impossibilities ! The thousand pounds and the girl may be gone to the Antipodes, for any thing I know about them. I wish you would make an end of your visit. If vulgar people will oblige one to infringe the laws of politeness....

SQUIRE.

SQUIRE. Pay me my money! and you, your house, and your politeness, may go to the devil, for what I care.

WID. What a savage!....Peace, monster, peace! I hear company in the hall. It is the voice of my dear uncle, just arrived from the West of England. If you have any regard for your personal safety, Mr. Bruin, I would have you slip down the back stairs....He has a most vindictive spirit, and never travels without an ample provision of whipcord.

SQUIRE. What the devil shall I do!....Which way must I turn?

WID. To the left....But hush....don't I hear him in the lobby?

SQUIRE. Zooks, how he roars!....[Sir Waldon *speaks without in a feeble tone.*] He has a voice like a speaking trumpet....I'll creep under the sofa.

WID. Not for the world!....No, no....meet him at once, and keep your own counsel.

SQUIRE. I'll be d..n'd if I do! You have cozened me enough already, no nearer relationship with your dear uncle, I give you thanks. [Conceals himself under the sofa.]

Enter Sir WALDON.

WID. This is a supreme felicity, my dear Sir. I did not expect to see you so soon....How did you leave the good family at home?

Sir WAL. [*aside.*] How wondrous affectionate she is!.... She has forgot the mistake of the light gold. [*Aloud.*] You are very kind, exceedingly kind; yet it is somewhat cruel too, to put a man in mind of his misfortunes. My family! That is the only blessing I want. I have no companion, but my pleasant little ward, and she will soon leave me, to take care of her own family. How miserable I shall be without a companion! Mankind was formed for society, and should
not

not live alone. My dear Widow, don't you begin to be tired of a solitary life ?

WID. If it were not for the image of my poor dear husband, I should be lost indeed.

Sir WAL. Yet it must be extremely melancholy....conversing continually with a spectre ; and very prejudicial to the spirits. Then, think of him how you will, you never can bring him to life again,

WID. O, no !....I have too much piety to wish it. I am of a resigned disposition, and always persuade myself every thing happens for the best.

Sir WAL. There you are right, and perfectly reasonable. Then, as so many would be happy to supply his place.....

WID. Do not shock my ears with such an expression ! You know not the vows I have made.....

Sir WAL. Or if I did, I am a young man of more spirit than to be discouraged by a widow's vow.

WID. [*looking at the sofa.*] Fie, fie ! You don't know how you distress me. I must not hear such conversation.

Sir WAL. Indeed, but you must.

SQUIRE. [*peeping from under the sofa.*] Egad, they are tender relations in the West !

WID. You are too precipitate....some other time.

Sir WAL. And why not now, my angelic Widow !....

“ Low as to thy feet doth Cassius fall.”

SQUIRE. Smoke the old prig !....D..n his whipcord, I have him on the hip....[*As Sir Wal. throws himself on his knees, Squire M. draws away his chair, and trying to catch it, he falls sprawling on the floor.*] Hark you, old one, is it your fashion in the West for an uncle to fall on his knees, to ask a blessing of his niece ?

Sir WAL. Surely there is no plot, to take away my life.... Widow, is this the image of your deceased husband?

WID. I am in as much consternation as yourself. I have seen the wretch, to be sure....he has been some time about town, people call him the rustic, and let him in for their amusement. But for his being here, it is all enchantment to me, upon my honour.

SQUIRE. Pay me my money, I say!

WID. Poor creature! He is intoxicated.

Sir WAL. Are you not afraid, young man, of the consequence of insulting a woman of quality?

SQUIRE. Quality!...Yes, I know some of her qualities.... Sold me a pretty girl, touched the ready, and shipped off the goods to another market. Rare qualities, d..n me!

WID. The filthy beast!....How he smells of strong liquors!

Sir WAL. He is punishable for this outrage.

SQUIRE. What's that you say, my old boy? Are you Judge, jury, beadle, or hangman, in the West? Hark ye!have not been at school as yet, but if you have a mind to try my mettle. [*Puts himself in a pugilistic attitude.*]

WID. Help! help!....Or poor Sir Waldon will be murdered!

SQUIRE. Plague on these squalling women!....Zooks, how I should have paid the old one! [*Wid. calls servants.*] 'Sbloöd! What an uproar!....It's time for me to try the mettle of my heels, egad! [*Runs out.*]

Sir WAL. [*to the servants, as they enter.*] Call a constable! Call a constable!

WID. It is not worth while....Toss the monster into the kennel, make a football of him, or what you will, it is of no manner of consequence.

Sir

Sir WAL. By no means....We must not take the law into our own hands....Call a constable, and let him be legally apprehended !

[Exit after the servants:]

WID. Dear Sir Waldon, don't concern yourself with the brute....Ha ha ha ! I have got admirably out of this dilemma, with a thousand pounds in my pocket, and an unsullied reputation....On my conscience, I am obliged to Maria, for taking herself so opportunely away.

[Exit, humming a tune:]

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I....A Room at Sir WALDON'S.

Enter SQUIRE, with a black patch across his forehead, conducted by a Servant, who leaves him.

SQUIRE.

A FINE house, i'faith!...Gad, this must be a girl of spirit, to invite a man she never spoke to in her life! We dashing fellows do bewitch the dear creatures with a glance. This cut across my eye, though, is plaguy unlucky....I wish the Widow and her myrmidons were soused in the Thames.... Gad so....Here comes the lady....Now to accost her like a gemman. *[Puts his glass to his eye, and stands leering.]*

Enter Miss MANSFIELD, dressed for the ball.

Miss M. Bless me!...I thought Captain Mortimer was here....Pray, Sir, have you any particular business with me?

SQUIRE. *[looking simple.]* Why....ye....yes....If you please.... He he he!

Miss M. Pray, then, let me know it, for I am in haste.

SQUIRE. *[aside.]* Zooks!...I believe it is my turn to be bewitched....I never was so confounded by a woman before.... *[Aloud.]* Business!...Why I thought like it was you that had some business with me, or you would not have sent for me.

Miss M. Send for you!...O! very true; you are the new shoemaker, my Lady Pettitoe recommended to me....You can't take the length of my foot at present, young man....If I have occasion for you, I will let you know when I am at leisure.

SQUIRE.

SQUIRE. Here's treatment for a gemman!...Taken for a shoemaker, after all...spite of glass, snuff-box, and neck-cloth....If these won't make a man the tippy, what the devil will! [*Aside.*] She's but a girl, for all she's so fine....dem'me! who's afraid! [*Aloud.*]...Sblood and thunder! Miss, open your eyes...Look at me well...and then tell me what you take me for!

MISS M. Bless me! Some poor madman, sure....If you can tell who you belong to, you shall be taken care of, and restored to your friends, young man.

SQUIRE. By the mass, you're a choice one....Ax a gemman to your house; call him a shoemaker....a madman....talk of restoring him to his friends!....If that's your sort, it must be d....d genteel, for it's devilish new, I'll be sworn.

MISS M. A gentleman!....Ask you to my house!....What can be the meaning of all this!

SQUIRE. What! You don't know, I suppose?...Quite forgot?...Why it's three hours ago....that's right....that's the go....But if I have not lost it, mayhap I may rub up your memory....[*Searching his pockets.*] Look at this ticket, and tell me if it is not your own hand-writing?

MISS M. O! Your name is Charles Mortimer!....Then I know perfectly what sort of a person to take you for. [*Aside.*] What a ridiculous mistake!

SQUIRE. I am glad you are come to your senses, after all. And now you think yourself a very pretty young lady, I hope.

MISS M. Yes, Sir, indeed I do.

SQUIRE. And you will never give yourself airs again; and go for to affront a gemman, that is really a gemman, any more?

MISS M. No, surely, that I won't; you may depend upon it!

SQUIRE.

SQUIRE. And now....what made you send for me?.... What!....caught by the eye....struck....thought me a charming fellow....eh?

Miss M. Indeed I did, from the very bottom of my heart.

SQUIRE. That's a good girl!....there's some sense in that.... And when I made my appearance, at the hour of appointment....Come, tell the truth....don't be shy.

Miss M. I found you a very different sort of person from what I took you for.

SQUIRE. Hey-day!....Why, what would the girl have!.... Oh! You did not take me for a young squire, mayhap, with a great estate in Lincolnshire?

Miss M. Indeed, I did not....No such idea entered my imagination.

SQUIRE. I thought as much....And you are not displeased to find out your mistake, I suppose.

Miss M. I cannot say that I am....As matters have turned out, it will suit my purpose tolerably well.

SQUIRE. [*aside.*] Suit her purpose!....Gad so, I must keep a sharp-look out here....This may be one of your sly ones, that grand-mamma warned me against.

Enter a SERVANT.

SERV. A strange gentleman, who calls himself Mr. Henry Piercy, begs the favour of being permitted to see you, on some important business.

Miss M. Mr. Henry Piercy!....Is he a clergyman?

SERV. His dress is that of a clergyman, madam.

Miss M. I shall see him with the utmost pleasure. But we shall be interrupted here....I will attend him in the anti-room.

SQUIRE. [*aside.*] Another charming fellow, I suppose....
He's

He's a parson, though, and dare not fight....Adslife, how I should like to kick him.

Miss M. But, hark-ye!...This being some impudent fellow dressed in his master's clothes, as you see, to impose himself on me as a gentleman; take him to the servants-hall, and, without doing him any personal injury, entertain him as he deserves. [*To the Squire.*] There, follow Timothy....when I am not otherwise engaged, I shall speak to you in the drawing-room. [*Exeunt Squire and Serv.*] How happy Maria will be on the unexpected arrival of her Piercy! [*Exit.*]

Enter a SERVANT, conducting Sir CHARLES MORTIMER and Mr. BURTON.

SERV. My mistress will wait upon you immediately. [*Exit.*]

BURTON. It is somewhat like dragging a bear to the stake, I must confess.

Sir CHA. Or rather, like bringing a miserable culprit to the pillory, where he must stand defenceless, and pelted by the multitude, without the power of relieving or revenging himself.

BURTON. But when it is once over, I think you will be unfortunate indeed, if you do not find some consolation, at least, resulting from the penance you have endured.

Sir CHA. Consolation!....Yes, truly....much on a parallel with that which a man experiences who obtains his liberty at the expence of his ears and his reputation....for, to a lover, life must be equally worthless, deprived of the woman he adores.

BURTON. But if that woman is undeserving of his affection!

Sir CHA. But if that woman commands his fate...holds the thread of his destiny in her hands....and can twist, knot, entangle, or clip it, at her will.....'Sdeath! man, you may as well talk to the raging waves, and bid them disobey the winds, as attempt to reason with a man in love.

BURTON.

BURTON. Then, if the delirium of the distemper is so strong upon you, e'en throw off all disguise at once: Sir Charles Mortimer may have a chance....however the poor soldier be rejected and despised.

Sir CHA. The devil take thee, for conjuring up that ex-cruciating idea. Yet do not pride thyself on a supposition of its novelty; for it is not the first time that I have been visited by the dangerous delusion. But, Heaven defend my senses from its power! Death itself would be infinitely preferable to a life of continual jealousy....jealousy of my own rent-roll; an enemy, which neither lead nor steel could extirpate....But my doom approaches; the executioners are at hand.

Enter Lord FILLIGREE and MORDECAI.

BURTON. Your humble servant, my Lord.

Lord FIL. Burton, how do you do?...Captain, your most devoted!

MOR. [*to Sir Cha.*] Sho, shir, you are come to vitnesh our final shentensh, I shupposh!

Sir CHA. I have been bidden to the ceremony; and the novelty of it engages my curiosity.

MOR. I doubt it vill be made a jesht of; Mish Mansfield ish sho monshtroush humouroush....I shall curb her shpirit when she ish my vife.

Sir CHA. [*aside.*] Infernal savage! [*Aloud.*] Your taste is somewhat singular....Most men, I imagine, would esteem Miss Mansfield's elegant vivacity amongst her most irresistible attractions.

MOR. Yesh; but I don't like vivashity.

Lord FIL. Nor I neither....I doubt I shall have some trouble in polishing over that rude *gaieté de cœur*, which, to do the dear creature justice, is her principal defect at present.

Sir

Sir CHA. Never fear, my Lord; when she is your wife, her *gaieté de coeur* will subside, of course, take my word for it. But you astonish me, gentlemen!....There are men, who, on the eve of so much happiness, would be intoxicated, and incapable of any adverse thought, whilst you seem perfectly indifferent and thankless for the beneficence of your fate.

Lord FIL. No, no; you wrong us, Mortimer. For my part, I am absolutely *obsédé*, by the superabundance of my gratitude....Do you think it possible for a poor fellow, with my *trifling* accomplishments, to overlook his obligations to any fair lady, who will take compassion on him?

Sir CHA. [*aside.*] Contemptible puppy!

MOR. If I marrish Mish Manshfield, I shall never forget de great riches she beshtowsh upon me.

BURTON. Here comes the lovely object of your controversy, apparently quite fearless of the discipline denounced against her.

Enter Miss MANSFIELD and Miss HASTINGS, laughing and talking.

Miss M. [*to Miss Has.*] How I shall enjoy the Widow's mortification!.....Ah! my sweet Lord Filligree, my otto of roses, my quintessence of Pulville!....And my sprig of sage, too!....How punctual you are to the hour of appointment!.... Cousin Burton, you bring your welcome along with you..... Sir, your humble servant. [*Curtsying formally to Sir Cha.*

Sir CHA. [*aside.*] The coldness of this reception is no more than I deserve, for the temerity of obtruding myself, as the only indifferent spectator of a scene, in which my own misery is the argument of the piece.

Miss M. Pray, gentlemen, has Sir Waldon been informed that you are here?

MOR. Vee have not sheen him; but I vish he vould come, for I long to be out of shushpenshe.

Miss M. And in this instance, at least, your wishes are no sooner formed than accomplished....You may take it for a favourable omen, if you are superstitious.

Enter Sir WALDON.

Sir WAL. Excuse me, my good friends....Unavoidable business.....

Miss M. Sir Waldon, give me leave to introduce Captain Mortimer, a Bath acquaintance of mine.

Sir WAL. You do me honour....I presume, Sir, Bath was beginning to grow stupid, when you left it!

Sir CHA. Most insupportably so, indeed! It retained not a single charm for me.

Sir WAL. [*apart.*] My dear Miss Mansfield, a word with you....Will not the presence of a stranger, be an impediment to the prosecution of your designs?

Miss M. Not in the least....Captain Mortimer is as welcome as any man, to hear the undisguised sentiments of my heart.

Sir WAL. Well, you must have your own way, I believe....There is no contradicting you on such a day as this.

Miss M. Adhere to that sentiment, my dear Sir, and I shall rest your much obliged.

Sir WAL. Come, come....Your lovers patience will be exhausted; and I am not a little anxious to know which of them is the happy man who has made an impression on your heart!

Miss M. Ah!....If I did but know which of them was most deserving of that heart!

MOR. Desharving!....Ihopesh you are not unacquainted vid my monshtrous possessions in de shtocks!

Miss

Miss M. Pshaw !....money must be out of the question....

Sir CHA. [*apart to BURTON.*] Money out of the question !
...did you hear that ?

BURTON. [*apart to Sir CHA.*] She is only amusing herself
with their impatience.

Sir WAL. Money out of the question, in a matrimonial
treaty ! That were a solecism against all rule.

MOR. If moneysh musht be out of de queshtion, you are
taking all de veight out of de shcale at vonce.

Miss M. Indeed !....His Lordship will not subscribe to the
humility of that idea, I imagine.

Lord FIL. Oh ! I am the humblest being in the universe !....
Fortune out of the question !....what is there in my person
and appearance to recommend me to a fair lady ?....Unless a
heart full of tenderness....and that, alas ! is what I have not
to bestow, since I first encountered the artillery of your eyes.

Miss M. [*apart.*] Bewitching creature !....Maria, do you
wonder that I am captivated ?

Miss HAS I am in a labyrinth !....And you possess the only
clue which can guide me through its intricacies.

Sir WAL. [*aside.*] Aye, aye....I thought she would take
the fribble.

Miss M. You are extremely eloquent, gentlemen....but
words are wind.....I wonder how you would act, were I to
refer your pretensions to the arbitration of the sword.

Sir WAL. Mercy on us !....Would you have a murder on
your conscience ?

MOR. I don't undershtand de ush of shwords....but vid a
pishtol, I tink I could bit a mark....if de law would take no
cognizance of de matter.

Lord FIL. Yes, yes....but I am no shot, let me tell you....
and besides.....

Miss M. And besides....You "scorn to make a fuss about a woman."....But you have "another story for the ears of Miss Mansfield."....Pray, my Lord, do you remember where you left this hat? [*Presenting a hat, putting on the green spectacles, and speaking in the Fortune-teller's tone.*]

Lord FIL. That hat!....It is....it is my hat.....Am I to believe my senses!....Mordecai, do you observe?

MOR. Dat I do, vid vonder and ashtonishment!....And sho, Mish Manshfield vas de magician dat terrified your Lordship out of your vits!.....I knew it vash all a trick.

Miss M. You are eminently sagacious, to be sure.....But, for all your cunning, the magician was too sly for either of you, my good friends.

Sir CHA. [*apart.*] How enchantingly she trifles with her power!....Burton, is this your specific for the delirium of love?

BURTON. It were enough to make a cynic rave, to behold such a creature sacrificed to the prejudices of education.

Miss M. And now, pray, my Lord, you who scorn to make a fuss about a woman....and you, Maishter Mordecai, who presume to appear again before the magician with an unshaven chin, in defiance of her commands....how can you expect *that* fate to be propitious, whose designs you have dared to pry into, and whose dictates you have disobeyed?

MOR. It vash noting at all, but a foolish frolic of his Lordship's.

Lord FIL. A mere whim, *pour passer le tems*, 'pon honour.

MOR. For my part, I am ash much devoted to you, ash if I vash a Chrishtian.

Lord FIL. And for mine, it is my sole ambition to be your slave.

Miss M. And for mine, I give all possible credit to your professions....for an earthquake has not swallowed up my estate.

estate.....But lay aside your apprehensions, and trust to the fidelity of my heart....a heart too immoveably fixed to be shaken by the occurrences of this morning.

MOR. Ah !...dat ish sho sbenshible !

Lord FIL. What an amiable susceptibility !

Sir WAL. [*aside.*] Gad, I began to be alarmed.

Sir CHA. [*apart.*] For heaven's sake, let us be gone....my feelings are on the rack.

BURTON. [*apart.*] Command them for the present ; and when the company remove into the ball-room, we will seize the opportunity to withdraw....wisely determining to abjure the whole mercenary sex.

Sir CHA. We can steal through the gallery unperceived.

MOR. My dear lady, remember dat vee are shtill in shush-pence.

Lord FIL. Pronounce our sentence, or I shall expire.

Miss M. Then whoever may be distinguished by my particular approbation....you are both equally determined to submit quietly to the decree.

MOR. Hish Lordship ish a man of more breeding den to make any dishturbance about de matter.

Lord FIL. And I will answer for the Jew, that he knows his own interest too well to prosecute a suit from which no damages can be recovered.

Miss M. Then, in order to deserve the character which my friend Mordecai has bestowed on me, I shall rigidly adhere to the dictates of my heart ; and, in the presence of this good company....I now positively declare, that....[*looking at them alternately*] that....NEITHER'S THE MAN.

Sir CHA. [*aside.*] Am I awake !

BURTON. By my soul, I thought so.

Sir

Sir WAL. Is this your respect for the advice and authority of your guardian.

MOR. A fine shpeculation, upon my vord....dish ish de lasht time I shall consharn myself about shtock, of vitch a voman ish de propriator.

Lord FIL. [*taking snuff carelessly.*] I am annihilated, 'pon honour.

BURTON. [*to Sir CHA.*] Shall we steal through the gallery unperceived.

Sir CHA. I am suspended between the extremes of life and death.

Sir WAL. And do you think, Miss Mansfield.....

Miss M. My dear guardy; for one moment give me leave.... a moment, which is mine by treaty, as well as law....There are the men of your choice....I have fulfilled my engagement with you, in having submitted to their addresses; and I now repeat, that neither of them can be the partner of my affections.....[*Coming forward, and casting a tender but diffident look at Sir CHA.*] And yet, Sir, as far as taking a husband will oblige you, unless a poor soldier should have too much pride to accept a heart, which unsolicited is won.....

Sir CHA. Extatic bliss !....Am I not in a dream !....[*Throws himself on his knees, and kisses her hand.*]....Speak, beatific spirit! and realise the vision which my vanity has formed.

Miss M. To be sure, when a woman is reduced to the necessity of speaking first, it would be horridly mortifying to be answered in the sober language of common sense.

Sir WAL. Miss Mansfield, it is my duty to interfere !

Miss M. Forgive me, my dear guardy, if I venture to confess, that I like this poor cornet a thousand times the better for having no fortune; because it gives me an opportunity of making a good use of mine.

MOR.

MOR. O den, if fortune ish your objection, Mish, you are desbeived in de gentleman....he ish no poor cornet, let me tell you, but a Baronet, vid an eshtate too large for all my shtock to purchase.

Lord FIL. And money enough besides to buy every acre of my estate, upon my veracity.

Sir WAL. O! O!....Then all my objections to the alliance are removed at once.

Miss M. Alas!....If that is the case, what becomes of my poor generosity?

Sir CHA. Think not, my angel! that it suffers any diminution by the small merit of disinterestedness, reserved for the man whom you have deigned to bless with your regard.

MOR. My Lord, I think you and I may as vell take our leave.

Miss M. No, pray, stay and partake of the gaieties of the evening....There is no offence, I hope, in choosing a husband for oneself....The rooms are filling already....And here comes the Widow Freelove, to remind me of the duties of the day....My dear Maria, summon up your courage....If she is impertinent, I shall come to an explanation at once.

Miss HAS. Compassion were a weakness, in my circumstances; but I wish the affair was over, with all my soul.

Enter the WIDOW FREELOVE.

Miss M. This is being a friendly visitor, my dear Widow; and I thank you for the compliment.

WID. I should not have come so unfashionably early, but....

Miss M. Give me leave to introduce you to Sir Waldon Levington....my honoured guardian....You never saw each other, I believe....but you may live to be better acquainted.

Sir WAL. Miss Mansfield, you suffer your levity to grow intolerably troublesome.

Miss

Miss M. Why, what have I said?....O! he is something too young for such a trust, to be sure....but he is very discreet, give you my honour.

WID. Pshaw!....ridiculous!....Sir Waldon Levington is my old friend.

Miss M. Indeed!....then pray give me leave to introduce to you another of your old friends, who wishes to return you thanks, for the striking marks of amity she has experienced at your hands.

WID. Give me leave to say, madam, that I do not consider as any testimony of yours, your thus insulting me with the presence of a person, of whose conduct I have such flagrant causes of complaint.

Miss M. O! I hate to foment family grievances....and keeping the hostile parties asunder, must preclude the probability of their adjustment. This lady has a thousand thanks to return you, I say, for your hospitality and kind disposal of her....Ha ha ha!....I wish your ladyship success in your new and honourable avocation.

WID. Permit me to order my coach, if you please.

Miss M. Stay, stay; there is another small matter of business between you, with which you have yet to be made acquainted; and the sooner it is settled, the better.

WID. I don't know what you mean.

Miss H. I am commissioned, madam, by Mr. Piercy, to inform you, that it is his intention to wait on you in the morning; and from him you will receive the particulars of the subject alluded to by Miss Mansfield.

WID. Mr. Piercy!.....And pray, madam, who is Mr. Piercy?

Miss H. With his name and character, I believe, you are tolerably well acquainted; and, but for his travelling dress, he

he would have had the honour of being personally known to you, ere this.

MISS M. His boots are his apology; and, in truth, he comes not on a bootless errand....one object of which, being no less than the production of the last will and testament of Doctor Hastings, lately but happily discovered; by which, his niece Maria is the sole inheritrix of his estates, real and personal.

SIR WAL. [*aside.*] So, so, then, the Widow will be no catch, after all.

WID. And for you, my good Sir, I cannot help observing, that you give an admirable proof of the sincerity of your professions, in suffering me to be thus insulted in your house, by a fabrication of malicious falshoods.

SIR WAL. O! pray do not let Mrs. Freelove be insulted in my house.

WID. O! Sir, to spare the excruciating anxiety you manifest on the occasion, I shall depart from it, without delay.....Heavens! and earth!....Are all the fiends of hell let loose against me?

SQUIRE. [*without.*] A masquerade!....O! dem'me, there's fun at a masquerade.

MISS M. [*to Sir Cha.*] Here comes your hopeful coz....I confess, he has not met with such treatment here, as your relation might have expected at my hands....But when you hear my provocation.....

SIR CHA. Without hearing it, I am ready to renounce all affinity with any cause of your resentment.

Enter the SQUIRE, dressed like a Groom, with a large key hanging by a cord to his neck, instead of a glass. A Servant follows him, and takes away his whip.

SERV. [*to the Squire.*] You must not take your whip into the drawing-room....You would not terrify the ladies!

SQUIRE. D..n me, why not?...Set 'em a squalling and capering....love a bit of fun. [*Looks through the key.*] There they are! [*Hiccups.*]...O! the pretty creeturs!

Sir WAL. Odso!....My old acquaintance under the sopha!

SQUIRE. Ah! my buxom Widow, are you there!....Ad-zooks, but you shan't escape me now!....No more sousing in the kennel!....Give me the girl, or the money!....Rare sport....paying a nate thousand down upon the nail, for a ducking in cold water!....No, no, it won't do.

WID. [*to Miss M.*] Methinks you might have been contented with your own genius for impertinence, without hiring a drunken postillion to assist you in insulting me.

Sir WAL. What, my dear Widow, have you so soon forgotten the "image" of your deceased husband?

SQUIRE. Ads my life!....Miss Hastings!....Hurra!....The prize is found....Hold, hold! [*stopping the Wid.*]...No finching!....I must have a word or two with that young lady, howsomever.

Sir CHA. [*stepping between him and Miss Has.*] But as your language, Sir, is different from that which is generally used in the education of young ladies, you must permit me to be your interpreter, if you please.

SQUIRE. You, Sir....Why, Sir....Why, you, Sir!....Have you any pertensions, like?

Sir CHA. The pretensions of a man, Sir; in which, I take it, the duty of defending every female from injury and insult, is naturally included.

SQUIRE. Well, Sir, I hope no offence....I ax pardon, if there is....And I must try to settle my pertensions with the Widow....But she's as cunning as a fox.

WID.

WID. You are most singularly happy, madam, in the assortment of your company !....When next you prepare an entertainment, I hope you will not have lost the art of assimilating characters.

MISS M. Perhaps my talents for associating ideas, may not be called forth by the superlatively refined sentiments and exemplary actions of the Widow Free love.

WID. Whose sentiments of you, madam, at least, are so *superlatively* beneficent, that she will take her leave....sincerely wishing you the full enjoyment of all those conjugal comforts, of which your present prospects [*glancing at Lord Fil. and the Jew*] afford you so flattering an earnest. [*Exit.*]

MISS M. [*looking tenderly at Sir Cha.*] Ha ha ha !....If a wasp could produce honey, I should not want a simile for that wish.

SQUIRE. Holloa, there !....Will have my money !....Won't be choused !

[*Exit after the Wid.*]

MISS M. Are you yet a stranger to this amiable relation ?

SIR CHA. Hitherto I have been so ; and, from this specimen of his character, can remain perfectly contented in my ignorance.

MISS M. Suppose we make a match between him and the Widow ?....But I cry you mercy, dear Sir Waldon, I forgot your prior claim to the blooming relict.

SIR WAL. You will never mend....But you forget the company in the next room. Possibly his Lordship may find a partner, capable of chacing away the horrors of despair ; while Mordecai and I stroll about, and amuse ourselves with the scene.

LORD FIL. I am engaged to lead off the first cotillon with my Lady Caroline Coupee.

Miss

Miss M. Right, my Lord!....A *corps de reserve* is the best security in love, as well as in war.

Allons!....for when the heart abounds with pleasures,
It beats in unison with dancing measures;
May grace direct us thro' th' intricate maze,
And teach us step by step to reach your praise



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